

COMMUNITY IDENTITY IN THE LATE PREHISTORIC YAZOO BASIN:  
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF PARCHMAN PLACE,  
COAHOMA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

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## ABSTRACT

Erin Stevens Nelson: Community Identity in the Late Prehistoric Yazoo Basin:  
The Archaeology of Parchman Place, Coahoma County, Mississippi  
(Under the direction of Vincas P. Steponaitis)

This dissertation examines the archaeology of Parchman Place (22CO511), a late Mississippi period (A.D. 1300-1550) Native American site in the northern Yazoo Basin, Coahoma County, Mississippi. Data from near-surface geophysical survey and excavation in mound and residential contexts undertaken from 2002-2011 provide evidence for the site's history of occupation as well as community building practices that took place there throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

An analysis of pottery recovered from Parchman resulted in a refinement of the phase chronology for the northern Yazoo Basin. Based on frequencies of types, attributes, and vessel shape, two ceramic sub-phases were identified, including a previously undefined middle Mississippian component. Additionally, two distinct vessel assemblages were identified for Parchman: a domestic assemblage used for cooking, serving, and storage; and a serving assemblage associated with large-scale community-wide feasting events.

Excavation and detailed analysis of mound stratigraphy at Parchman revealed a number of distinct mound building practices. These include founding events, mantle construction, building and dismantling of summit structures, veneering, truncation, and incorporation. These

practices indicate that mound building was a salient way of negotiating community values surrounding elite status, leadership, and the Mississippian cosmos.

Targeted excavations of magnetic gradiometer anomalies confirmed the presence of multiple burned Mississippian structures on mound summits and in residential areas. Spatial analysis of geophysical features in residential areas indicates that most neighborhoods were arranged in courtyard groups around a central plaza. Conversely, one residential area was anomalous in that it was spatially segregated from the plaza and the houses within it were arranged in rows on either side of a path or corridor oriented toward the site's largest platform mound. These results indicate that ideas related to community solidarity *and* social differentiation were encoded in spatial practice at Parchman.

The final chapter offers a reconstruction of the occupational history of Parchman, beginning with the founding of the community in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and continuing through its abandonment in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The northern Yazoo Basin is home to one of the densest pre-Columbian occupations in North America, as demonstrated by the close spacing of late Mississippi period (A.D. 1350-contact) mound sites in the region. Parchman Place (22CO511) (Figure 1.1) is just one of several Mississippian sites located in present-day Coahoma County, Mississippi. Despite its archaeological richness, the northern Yazoo Basin has seen less archaeological investigation than elsewhere in the southeastern United States. What we *do* know about Mississippian settlements in the region raises a number of interesting questions. Broadly speaking, the close spacing of apparently contemporaneous mound sites indicates that the late prehistoric occupation of the northern Yazoo Basin does not neatly fit the standard model of a hierarchically-organized, buffered settlement pattern considered typical of Mississippian chiefdoms (see Hally 1993, 1999 for an example from north Georgia). This is not so troubling, as we have other examples of cases that are anything but “typical” (e.g. Blitz 1999). It does, however, raise a question about what other types of social organization this clustered settlement pattern might represent.

A useful way to approach this and related questions is to think about the region in terms of the communities that resided here and the interactions within and among them. Considering the nature of past communities allows us to focus on social relationships among people and material practice and to bridge multiple analytical scales. My research explores such questions as what constitutes a Mississippian community in the late prehistoric northern Yazoo Basin, and

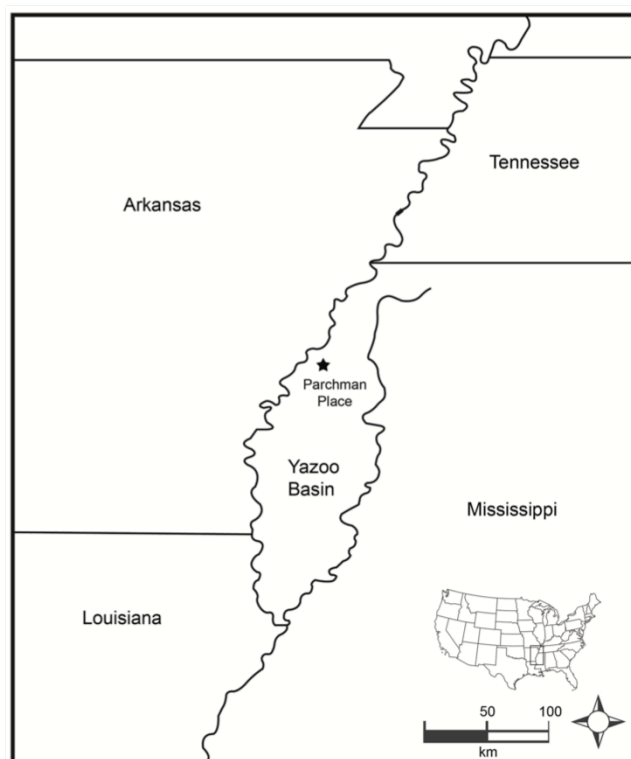


Figure 1.1. Location of Parchman Place (22CO511) within the northern Yazoo Basin.

more importantly, *how* are these communities created, maintained and transformed through practice? I address these questions by analyzing the material remains of daily interactions among community members at Parchman Place, one of several late prehistoric mound sites in the northern Yazoo. My research focuses on practices of mound building, feasting, and the organization of community space as well as everyday activities such as pottery production, daily food consumption, and the construction of domestic habitations. All of these speak to issues of identity formation and intra-group social relations at multiple scales of analysis, ranging from the intimate scale of the neighborhood, to gradually larger scales including entire sites and regions, as well as the Mississippian world as a whole. I find that the people of Parchman participated in different forms of community-making at each of these scales and that focusing and refocusing

our analytical lens to investigate them leads to a richer and more nuanced understanding of social interactions among people and groups in the late prehistoric Yazoo Basin.

I begin this chapter with a review of community studies in archaeology, with special attention to broader theoretical trends as well as the ways in which Americanist archaeologists have typically characterized past communities (see Harris 2014 for a recent review that compares American and European perspectives on community studies). I also review ethnographic accounts of historic period southeastern Indian groups with ties to the region, which contain much information about social organization that may be relevant for understanding Mississippian period communities. Furthermore, recent collaborative work by archaeologists, art historians, Native religious practitioners, and others has resulted in useful reconstructions of the ways Mississippian people understood the cosmos and their place within it as well as how these beliefs were expressed in material practice. Following this review, I focus more particularly on the northern Yazoo Basin and on the site of Parchman Place (22CO511), describing early archaeological investigations at the site as well as more recent work undertaken since 2002. Finally, I outline the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Communities and community identity have been conceptualized in a variety of ways by archaeologists. Much of the archaeological work in the Lower Mississippi Valley and elsewhere has been carried out within a culture-historical framework and has focused on identifying and/or reconstructing archaeological cultures or phases based on recurring similarities among grouped artifacts. In particular, archaeologists have been concerned with defining spatial and chronological relationships among assemblages, and with fitting sites into this larger framework

based on the combination of (mainly ceramic) artifacts found in association with them (Mainfort 2005; Phillips 1970; Phillips et al. 1951, Willey and Phillips 1958). Several researchers (e.g. Jones 1997, O'Brien and Lyman 1998) point to the tendency of culture historians to conceive of prehistoric communities as conservative, unchanging entities that are bounded in time and space, akin to what Murdock's (1949) work first laid out as the "natural" community, which he and others equated to the archaeological site.

While this critique is valid in many cases, a close reading of the work of some culture historians reveals a more complicated view of past peoples and our reconstructions of them: "types, varieties, and modes are vehicles for the expression of cultural and historical relationships. The emphasis on their formal properties is a matter of prior necessity only because we usually have to formulate these units before we know precisely what the cultural and historical relationships are" (Phillips 1970:23). As Dunnell (1985) points out, and as this statement indicates, early investigators working in the Lower Mississippi Valley such as Phillips, Ford, and Griffin were aware of the limitations of their methods (regional survey, surface collection, ceramic seriation), and considered their work to be preliminary to the task of reconstructing the lives and relationships of people who lived in the Lower Mississippi Valley. In the same way, I consider the reconstruction of spatial and chronological relationships among residential districts at Parchman to form a necessary foundation on which to build further analyses concerned with identity formation and intra-group social relations.

In response to critiques of the merely descriptive nature of culture-historical approaches, many scholars have focused on how Mississippian sociopolitical systems (variously described as simple or complex chiefdoms, polities, etc.) functioned in regional contexts. Anderson's (1994) work in the Savannah River, Blitz's (1993a) work in the Tombigbee region, and King's (2003)

work in the Etowah River Valley are just a small sample of these regional studies within the expansive Mississippian literature. Settlement pattern studies such as these have drawn attention to the incredible diversity in prehistoric social formations, but have rarely considered the nature of local communities except in terms of their form and function within the regional system:

“settlement pattern studies often conceive of communities as settlement types that fulfill specific functions within a larger social system” (Yaeger and Canuto 2000:4). In my view, this omission is largely a matter of scale; significantly, the focus on social organization and its material correlates adopted by these studies is something that can be adapted to investigate local scales.

My own research is inspired by the observation of an unusual settlement pattern in the northern Yazoo Basin, and I consider the exploration and explanation of this pattern to be an important long-term research goal. However, I believe the most fruitful place to begin these explorations is with local communities themselves, as they are the primary locus of interactions among neighbors, relatives, and strangers. It is in the material remains of these interactions that archaeologists can discern some of the ways people identified themselves with *and* within their communities.

Despite the relative lack of archaeological studies that focus on prehistoric communities in the northern Yazoo Basin, in places that have received considerable attention from archaeologists, such as the Black Warrior River Valley and the American Bottom, an explicit focus on community has been adopted (King 2006; Knight 1998; Knight and Steponaitis 1998; Pauketat 2007; Pauketat and Alt 2003; Steponaitis 1978, 1983). As these and other studies (Blitz 1999, Boudreaux 2007, Marcoux 2008) illustrate, communities themselves have recently come into focus as a legitimate scale of research (as distinct from the scale of sites, regions, polities, or households). Concurrently, archaeologists have begun to rethink their understandings of

community as a given, “natural” social unit and to ask questions about the process by which community identity is created and maintained (Díaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Pauketat 2007; Stark 1998; Yaeger and Canuto 2000).

Many recent approaches are influenced by the work of Barth (1969), who critiques the idea of ethnicity as an aspect of culture or a natural category, and considers it instead to be a form of social organization, the boundaries of which are constantly maintained and negotiated. Archaeologists have extended Barth’s ideas to groups not primarily characterized by ethnicity such as lineages, territorial groups, and communities based on gender, occupation, age, and so on (see chapters in Díaz-Andreu et al. 2005). These approaches are also heavily influenced by practice-based theories of social interaction, such as those introduced by Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1979, 1984). Practice theories of social interaction stress *what people do*, both discursively and on a more routine, non-discursive basis. Significantly, they consider daily practice as structured by historical conditions and existing social structures. In turn, those conditions and structures are impacted by practice. Marcoux (2008:109) provides a succinct summary of this point of view in his discussion of historic southeastern Indian groups: “their communities were not bounded, static locations on a landscape; instead, they were fluid, socially constituted collectivities of individuals linked through shared identities .... These communities were created by the shared practices of people who interacted on a daily basis.”

While this definition of community has several advantages, two points require further discussion. First, the criterion of shared identity downplays social difference *within* communities. This is related to Barth’s (1969) ideas regarding the self-ascriptive nature of communities, that is, that individuals identify with a broader community of people based on a set of criteria that are decided by that group. Stated another way, a community is a group of people who identify with

one another in opposition to those they conceive of as “other.” However, this criterion does not consider classes of people who have no choice about their participation—war captives and slaves are obvious examples of this, but we can also agree that not everyone in a class-based society has equal say about what it is that constitutes group membership. Furthermore, individuals may have varying degrees of influence in different situations, and even those who do have a say may not agree with one another. “Community,” therefore, is something that is constantly negotiated among group members, some of whom have more influence than others.

Second, the criteria of daily interaction excludes groups of people who may identify with and recognize one another as belonging to the same group, but who do not interact with one another on a regular basis. These “imagined” communities (Anderson 1983; Isbell 2000; chapters in Yeager and Canuto 2000) might spread over thousands of miles with limited movement of goods or people but widespread communication of thoughts and beliefs. While ideological communities may produce vastly different site layouts and mundane goods that are not intelligible outside of their smaller-scale communities, other aspects *do* manifest physically with pan-regional recognition of meaning or purpose, such as certain iconographic motifs or other aspects of material culture such as artifacts and monumental constructions. Though the primary focus of the present work is on *local* manifestations of community, I also investigate the ways that people living at Parchman in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries identified themselves with the larger Mississippian world and situated themselves within the Mississippian cosmos. While the actions people took to accomplish these goals were necessarily tied to physical space, they indicate affiliation with a much larger community of people than those they interact with daily.

Here again, a focus on process and the practices associated with community-building is useful in circumventing problems associated with dichotomizing definitions of community as

“real” (in a physical sense) or “imagined.” Consequently, many researchers emphasize the multiple axes and scales through which communal identities are created and maintained. Pauketat (2007:78), for instance, asks whether it would be useful to view communities in terms of the *identities* of those who make them up: “if so, couldn’t we imagine any number of kinds and scales of community identities dependent on the circumstances of how people gathered at particular times and places?” As Marcus (2000:239) points out, community is more than “a cluster of artifacts and ruined structures that exists in space.” Rather, it is “a network of interactions” between people at various scales. Lucy (2005:87) suggests that archaeologists should more carefully consider the social contexts in which people create and use material things, for “it is these differences in practice that may serve as the locus for ethnic or communal distinctions, and it is these differences (fortunately) that are accessible to archaeologists.”

Because people in the past participated in different types of communities in different ways, it is necessary to consider *which* artifact classes are most appropriate for a given scale and type of community in question. Furthermore, social groups in the past simultaneously communicated different ideas about what it means to belong to a community, so that the boundaries of community are maintained in ways that require multiple avenues of investigation. Fortunately for archaeologists, we can observe multiple axes of sameness and difference in cultural practices of prehistoric groups.

On the one hand, low-visibility artifacts, or their low visibility manufacturing steps, represent the enculturated background of their maker/s, a viewpoint espoused by researchers concerned with practice-oriented studies of technology (e.g. Dobres 2000; Marcoux 2008). Thus, certain artifact classes can speak to shared group identities that are not necessarily consciously expressed. These non-discursive activities might include steps in the production of ceramic



vessels or other goods, household vessel assemblages, mundane daily food habits, and architectural construction practices, to name a few. Similarities in these processes and their outcomes can indicate a shared common identity in the sense that people were brought up with commonly held ideas about the proper way to build a house or prepare a certain dish.

Other forms of material practice intentionally express ideas about social sameness or difference. These discursive materials and practices might include trade items and exotic goods, decorative aspects of material culture, feasts and other non-everyday eating events, and monumental architecture, among others. In our interpretations of past communities, we should consider the tensions between non-discursive, enculturated practices and other, more visible practices that intentionally convey messages about group affiliation.

The definition of community I apply here is necessarily flexible, but I stress that communities are *made* through daily practice and *lived* through material culture and space. Therefore, objects and spaces as well as the histories and meanings that they invoke are key to interpreting the past and understanding community. In summary, I follow others in considering that communities are defined by people and their interactions, by the physical and social spaces in which practice takes place, and by historical context, including existing social structures and larger political formations.

While practice-based studies of community building emphasize the actions of individuals and groups, these actions always take place within particular local and historical circumstances. When considering the possibilities for understanding these circumstances, we can look to ethnographically documented accounts of the social organization and belief systems of southeastern Native groups beginning in the early contact period. Despite local variation and change over time (Urban and Jackson 2004), many of the principles guiding kin-based social

organization were broadly shared among contact period Indian groups. In particular, the Muskogean tribes (including the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and others), historically located near Parchman, held many aspects of social organization in common, including matrilineal descent and matrilocal residence as well as organizing structures such as clans and moieties. Members of these social entities were distributed in towns in similar ways and individual towns likewise interacted with other towns in similar ways (Hudson 1976; Knight 1990; Speck 1907; Swanton 1928a, 1931a, 1946; Urban and Jackson 2004). These widespread similarities and the late date of Parchman (as well as the archaeological evidence) suggest that some of these principles of social organization may have relevance for understanding the nature of community at Parchman.

Knight (1990) has attempted to reconstruct “the nature of basic kin groups and their relationship to the political system” of Mississippian societies from contact period accounts of several southeastern Indian groups, including the Timucua, the Chickasaw, and the Natchez. He starts from the common observation that clans in the southeastern United States were generally exogamous social categories based on filial descent through matrilineal (though some were patrilineal). Clans were affiliated with one of two major social divisions (sometimes called moieties) that were understood as both contrasting and complementary in nature. Within these major divisions or moieties, the clans were ranked, and the two moieties were also ranked with respect to one another. Clans were “only weakly corporate,” and members of clans did not constitute localized groups, but members of each clan were dispersed among many different towns.

Local manifestations of clans frequently took the form of small-scale, corporate lineages or sub-clan groups, as in the “house-groups” of the Chickasaw (Brightman and Wallace 2004;

Knight 1990; 2010; Speck 1907; Swanton 1928a) and Choctaw (Galloway and Kidwell 2004; Swanton 1931a; Urban and Jackson 2004). Taking the historic period Chickasaw as one example, Knight (2010) describes such lineages or “sub-clan groups” as corporate in nature. These groups, composed of related women and their husbands and children, resided together and were tied to estates that included houses, shared communal space, and agricultural fields. Chickasaw estates were named and their members were thought to share particular characteristics of personality and custom. I suggest in the following chapters that residential neighborhoods at Parchman, particularly those centered around courtyard groups, may represent the living arrangements of local clan-based lineages similar in character to house societies, an argument Wilson (2008:17,75) has made for multi-household groups at early Moundville (But see Knight 2016; Scarry and Steponaitis 2016 for alternative interpretations). Additionally, James (2015) has used burial data from the nearby Carson Mounds to argue that social houses may have been a key feature of social organization at that site.

At a larger scale, multiple lineages or house-groups resided together in towns, referred to by the Creek as *talwas* (Ethridge 2003; Knight 1994; Swanton 1946) and by the Choctaw as *oklas* (Galloway and Kidwell 2004). Historic towns were autonomous, considered by Urban and Jackson (2004:703) to be the “minimally self-sufficient units of Muskogean social organization.” Often, they were associated with shared ceremonial facilities, perhaps including a square ground, ball ground, and council house (Lewis et al. 1998). Town members additionally shared a ceremonial fire and people of the same town were referred to as being of the same “fire.” Though towns had a physical presence on the landscape, physicality was not their defining feature. In fact, towns could be nucleated or dispersed across the landscape, and could even move locations entirely while retaining their essential character. Rather it was the members themselves and their

shared ceremonial practice that constituted a town, much in the way that we think of congregants and their shared religious practice as constituting a church (Scarry and Steponaitis 2016).

Though autonomous, alliances and other relationships existed between historic period towns, “reflecting a broader awareness of community and perhaps tribal identity” (Urban and Jackson 2004:703). Sometimes towns formed larger political organizations, as with the historic period Creek Confederacy.

Prehistorically, towns were sometimes (perhaps frequently) incorporated into polities or “chiefdoms” that were hierarchical in the sense that people of one town might owe allegiance or be subject to the leader of another (Clayton et al. 1993). Significantly, relationships within and among towns were negotiable, and polities as well as towns could merge or fission in response to local conditions (Anderson 1994, Blitz 1999). As with the lineages or house groups discussed above, towns represent localized manifestations of the principle organizing social structures of southeastern Indian groups and are thus relevant for studying the community of people that resided at Parchman just prior to Spanish contact.

At yet another scale of analysis, researchers have begun to investigate how Mississippian people understood the cosmos and their place within it (Lankford et al. 2011, Pauketat and Emerson 2001; Reilly and Garber 2007, Townsend and Sharp 2004). We know quite a bit about the belief systems of native southeastern people from ethnographic material gathered since the period of initial contact with Europeans (starting in 16<sup>th</sup> century) and extending into the present. Today, many Indian people continue to map their vision of the cosmos in ceremonies such as stomp dances (e.g. Jackson 2003).

According to these (re)constructions, the landscape of Native southeastern cosmology was made up of three worlds. The upper world is made of air, and is multi-layered. According to

Hudson, the upper world has associations with “structure, expectableness, boundaries, ... order, stability, and past time” (Hudson 1976:128). The sun inhabits the upper world, as do other supernaturals (the sun often being thought of as the “chief deity” [Swanton 1928d] or “Creator” [Jackson 2003]). The under- or beneath world, which is made of water, is also multi-layered. Categorically opposed to the upper world, it is associated with “inversions, ... invention, fertility, disorder, change [and] future time” (Hudson 1976:128), and is inhabited by underworld beings, notably the “underwater panther.” In between the upper- and under-worlds is this world, the world inhabited by humans, plants and animals, powers associated with the four winds, and *fire*, the earthly representation of the sun. This world is conceived as a flat earth-disc—sometimes floating on the waters of the underworld, sometimes suspended (e.g. from the sky by snakes), sometimes supported by supernatural beings (e.g. balanced on the back of a turtle). Though there is variation in the means by which the earth-disc is supported, *balance* is something that has to be achieved and actively maintained, both in this world and between the above- and beneath-worlds (Hudson 1976; Lankford 2007).

The three worlds are separate but there are connections between them—in the form of *axis mundi* and also “portals” through which certain people and supernaturals can travel. Often, the *axis mundi* is represented visually as a tree and sometimes as a striped pole. It can also be a column of light or a column of smoke. Iconographically, it is sometimes symbolized by the superimposed fire/sun symbols—what Lankford calls a “mystical axis mundi, one created by the invisible relationship between Sun and fire” (Lankford 2007:31). I would suggest, incidentally, that this connection is *not* invisible, or not always so. Rather, from the point of view of this world, the connection between the earthly fire and the heavenly sun can be represented by a column of smoke, which would be visible both night and day.

Researchers involved in the Texas State Mississippian Iconography Conference as well as others have recently explored the cosmological significance of Mississippian iconographic motifs. Lankford (2004; 2007) demonstrates that certain shell gorgets can be considered cosmograms or maps depicting the tri-partite nature of the world and the links between them. To demonstrate this, he breaks down the elements of the Cox gorget into five fields: (1) cross; (2) rayed circle; (3) looped square; (4) crested birds; and (5) circular shell (Figure 1.2). Each of these fields is associated with one of the three divisions of the world—the circular shell references the underworld (in both shape and *material*). The crested birds and the looped square reference the winds and the powers, supernatural beings of this world. Finally, the cross represents fire, the earthly representation of the sun, associated with the upper world and here represented as the rayed circle. Thus, the Cox gorget is a map of the cosmos seen in plan view.

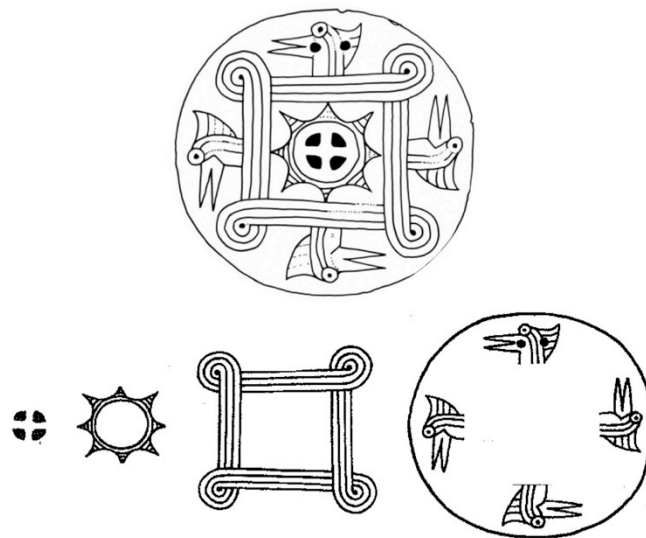


Figure 1.2. (a.) Drawing of Cox Gorget. (b.) Elements of Cox Gorget separated into fields (Lankford 2007: Figure 2.2).

Similarly, Pauketat and Emerson (1991) have equated Ramey pots with the Mississippian cosmos. In particular, the decorative elements of Ramey pots typically consist of a central design element (usually a circle or “volute”), which they equate with “serpentine and marine shell forms, symbolizing Under World themes” (Pauketat and Emerson 1991:928). Most Ramey pots also contain “adjunct elements” that “exhibit some degree of layering or ‘stratification’” (Pauketat and Emerson 1991:925) (Figure 1.3). Finally, the shoulders of Ramey pots are often decorated with design elements with quadripartite division, similar to the “looped square” design that Lankford interpreted as a “this world” symbol on the Cox gorget. The authors suggest therefore, that the Ramey pot is the Mississippian world in microcosm—with the body of the pot (and its contents) representing the underworld, the shoulder representing this world, and the layered design element representing the upper world. In order to retrieve the solid or liquid contained in the pot, one had to reach through the opening of the pot into the underworld.

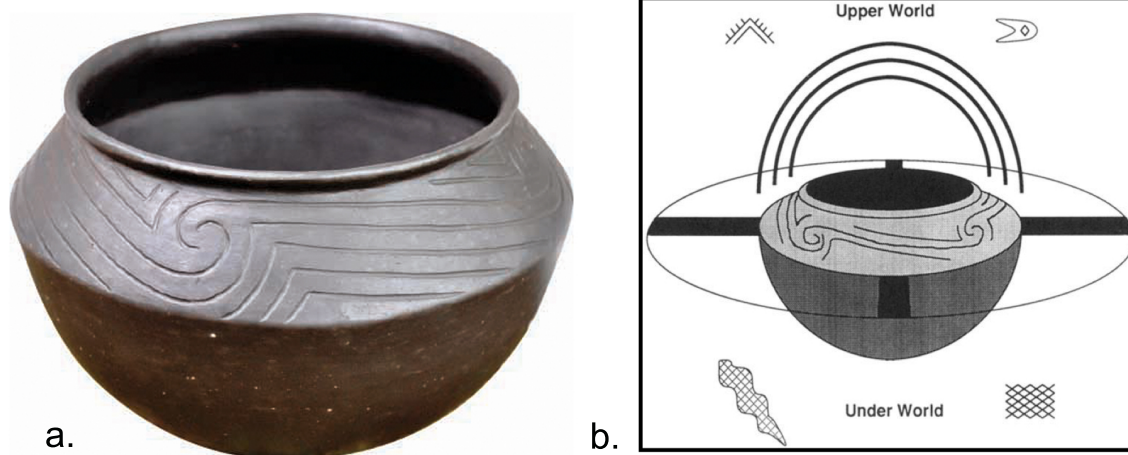


Figure 1.3. (a.) Reproduction of Ramey Incised pot found at Cahokia by Tammy Beane (image from <http://www.lookoutalabama.com/2013/09/one-of-a-kind-treasures/>, accessed 9/25/15). (b.) Schematic drawing of Ramey Incised pot as Mississippian cosmos (Pauketat and Emerson 1991: Figure 11).

While these serve as two examples of how Mississippian people represented the cosmos using iconographic representations on portable artifacts, others have suggested the ways these meanings are incorporated into monumental architecture. Knight (1981; 1986) has interpreted earthen mounds as symbols of the earth, pointing to linguistic evidence as well as southeastern “four corners” cosmology to demonstrate the symbolic significance of rectangular flat-topped constructions. As mentioned above, many historic southeastern Indians thought of the world as a “flat island” that either floated atop the waters of the underworld or was suspended from the sky by cords representing the four cardinal directions, each of which had important social values associated with them (Hudson 1976:122, 132). This connection closely follows an argument made by Swanton (1928b) and both Swanton and Knight emphasize that the building of mounds, both prehistorically and historically, is a communal undertaking related to world renewal. They do so by drawing attention to important similarities between mound building and the busk or Green Corn ceremony practiced by a number of southeastern Indian groups.

Significantly, for our purposes, Knight makes a distinction between Mississippian platform mounds and “other small mounds formed by successive ash piles from the annually renewed sacred fire” (Knight 1989:283). This distinction can also be seen in certain square ground schematics prepared by Swanton (1928c) (Figure 1.4). Jackson (2003) describes the process of fire renewal among the contemporary Yuchi of Oklahoma. Each year the old (“polluted”) fire is extinguished and the hearths of both domestic dwellings and ceremonial buildings are cleaned out in preparation for the new fire. “Once established, this fire would be taken from the square to the camps at the ground’s perimeter. This act replicated the pattern of bringing the new fire to the households in the compact, pre-removal towns (Jackson 2003:198).”



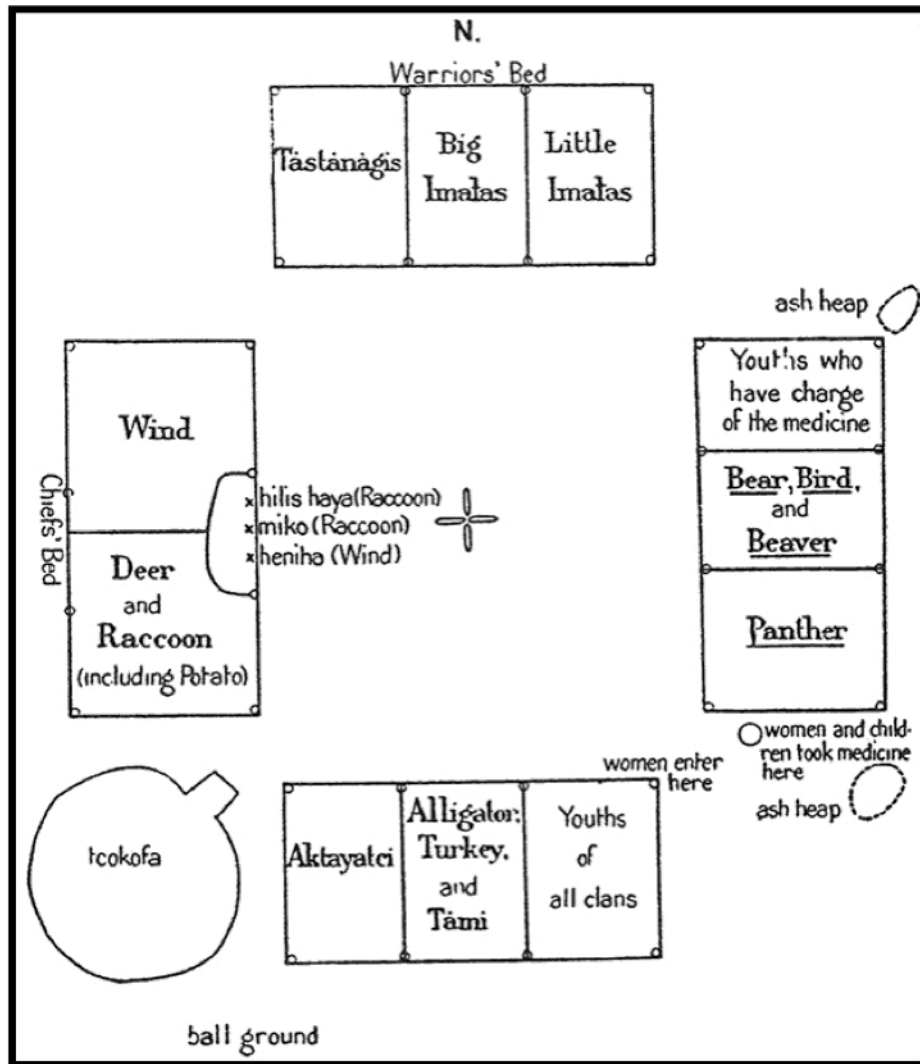


Figure 1.4. Plan of Kealedji Square Ground with ash heaps at the eastern perimeter (Swanton 1928c: Figure 52).

Like the cosmos itself, fire is a metaphor that is multi-layered. It simultaneously refers to the Sun (itself a metaphor for the divine being of the upper world), to the household, to the community (in the sense of *talwa* or town), and to relationships between communities: “In historic times Creek chiefdoms formed alliances with each other which they expressed by saying that they were ‘of the same fire’” (Hudson 1976:235 [citing Haas 1940]). As such, fire was at the center of social relations at every level of existence from the household to the cosmos.

Maintaining this fire was a significant way of renewing the balance of the world and the social relations that exist within it. In the following chapters, I argue that people living at Parchman used fire and smoke, as well as ash and other substances with cosmological significance in acts of community-building aimed at situating themselves within the broader Mississippian cosmos.

### **Background and Previous Work**

The Yazoo Basin is described by Phillips et al. (1951:16) as the area approximately 60 miles (97 km) across, at its widest point, between the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers and extending for approximately 200 miles (322 km) between Memphis, Tennessee and Vicksburg, Mississippi. It is characterized by a complex network of basins and ridges resulting from multiple abandoned river channels and meander scars of the Mississippi, Ohio, Deer Creek, Sunflower, and Yazoo rivers. This network of meandering rivers has resulted in a number of natural levees ideal for the intensive cultivation of maize and native cultigens. It is therefore no surprise that Mississippian and earlier prehistoric people thrived in the area. Nonetheless, the northern Yazoo Basin has been understudied archaeologically, despite its impressive wealth of archaeological remains and widespread recognition of the importance of this region for understanding late Mississippian social dynamics (Brown 2008; Johnson 2003; McNutt 1996b; Phillips 1970; Rafferty and Peacock 2008; Steponaitis et al. 2002).

Early investigations in the northern Yazoo Basin generally took the form of surveys and some limited excavation, usually as part of larger projects focused on the Lower Mississippi Valley, or even the Mississippi Valley as a whole. Among these, the work of the Lower Mississippi Survey (LMS), namely Philip Phillips, James A. Ford, and James B. Griffin, is undoubtedly the most exhaustive and influential (Phillips et al. 1951). The results of the LMS's

mid-20<sup>th</sup> century survey remain the primary basis for our understanding of the culture history of the Lower Valley and the Yazoo Basin (Dunnell 1985, McNutt 1996b). Phillips (1970), employing his type-variety system, utilized ceramic complexes to define archaeological phases for the region, which “recast the culture history of the entire valley into a detailed series of regional chronologies, providing the means for correlating events in the archaeological record and asking questions about development, interaction, and process” (Brain 1988:49).

Additional work has taken place in the southern portion of the Yazoo Basin at well-known ceremonial sites such as Winterville and Lake George (Brain 1989, Jackson et al. 2009; Williams and Brain 1983). Several late prehistoric phases to the north and west of the study area have also been investigated, including the Powers and Cairo Lowland phases and the Pemiscot Bayou locality in southeastern Missouri (Black 1979; Lafferty and Price 1996; Lewis 1990; O’Brien 1994, 2001; Price and Griffin 1979; Williams 1954); the Nodena, Parkin, Kent, Belle Meade, and Quapaw phases of northeast and east-central Arkansas (Brown 2005; Hoffman 1990; House 1991, 1996; Mainfort and Jeter 1999; D. Morse 1989, 1990; P. Morse 1981, 1990; Morse and Morse 1996; Perino 1966); and the Walls and Hollywood phases of northwest Mississippi (Haley 2014; Lumb and McNutt 1988; McNutt 1996; Smith 1990). A number of overviews focusing on the central and lower Mississippi Valley have also been produced (Dye and Cox 1990; Mainfort 2001; McNutt 1996; Morse and Morse 1998; Rafferty and Peacock 2008).

This work focuses on Parchman Place, a late prehistoric mound site in the northern Yazoo Basin and the type site for Phillips’ Parchman phase. Parchman is situated to the east of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Sunflower River, and to the west of a smaller, unnamed drainage. The natural levee and ridge and swale topography that characterizes the site was created by the flooding action of two successive Mississippi River channels (Fisk’s [1944] channels 10 and 11;

Saucier's [1994] meander belt stages 2 and 3; see also Lowe [2006]). According to Stout-Evans (2011a:6), the levee sands underlying Parchman were deposited by one or both of these major channels, which were abandoned well before the site was occupied, leaving behind a stable landform that was not subject to routine flooding. The more silty soils overlying the coarse levee sands were deposited by smaller, less active creeks that had reclaimed portions of the older channels. Presently, Mill Creek has partially recaptured Fisk's channel 10, the earlier of the two major channels in Parchman's vicinity, while the unnamed drainage to the east corresponds to Fisk's channel "J" (Stout-Evans 2011a; see Lowe 2006 for a detailed reconstruction of paleochannels near Parchman).

The first archaeologists to visit Parchman Place include Cyrus Thomas and Calvin Brown, though Squire and Davis, Charles Peabody, and C.B. Moore also conducted work nearby (Brain 1988; Starr 1984; Weinstein et al. 1985). Thomas visited the region in the late 19th century, and included several mounds from Coahoma County (Carson, Dickerson, Clarksdale, and Roselle [later Parchman]) in a list of mounds being compiled by the Smithsonian (Weinstein et al. 1985:3-1). In a 1926 volume published by the Mississippi Geological Survey, Brown compiled information on known mounds and earth-works throughout the state of Mississippi, including several in Coahoma County. Parchman Place is mentioned briefly as "a mound...on the Roselle Place two miles southwest of Coahoma" (Brown 1926:107; Phillips et al. 1951:51).

The first significant work at Parchman occurred in April of 1940, when Ford and Griffin visited Parchman to make surface collections and to survey and map the site as part of the Lower Mississippi Survey (LMS). The surveyors noted that Parchman "exhibits a well-defined plaza arrangement dominated by a large platform mound of uncertain shape, about 60 m in diameter at the base and 6 or 7 meters high" (Phillips et al. 1951:372; Steponaitis et al. 2002). Their site map

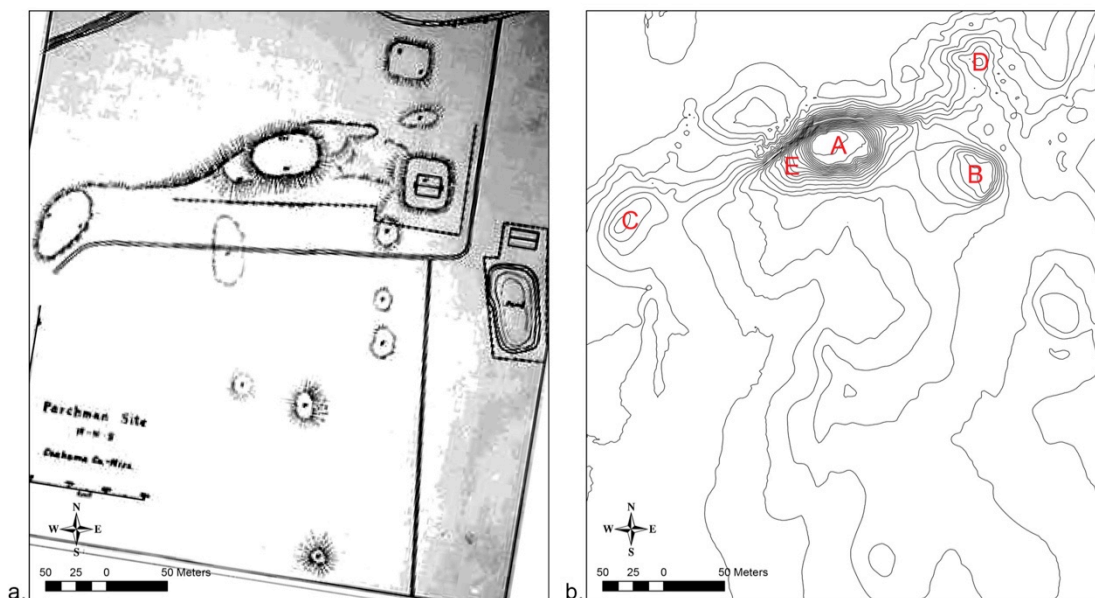


Figure 1.5. Parchman Place (22CO511), Coahoma County, Mississippi. (a). Plane table map produced by Ford and Griffin of the Lower Mississippi Survey (LMS) in 1940 (© President and Fellows of Harvard University, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 993-23-10/100524.2.2.3.1/99090048). (b). Center for Archaeological Research topographic map (50 cm contour interval). Maps are plotted at the same scale and orientation.

(Figure 1.5.a.) also depicts four smaller platform mounds ranging in height from 1.5 m to 3 m and labeled in Figure 1.5.b. as Mounds B through E. It should be noted that these letter designations were not originally used by the LMS and it is not clear from their map whether they considered Mound E to be a separate mound or a ramp or apron-like feature of Mound A. In any case, the LMS map was accomplished with the use of a plane table and is therefore quite accurate; mapped features correspond well with existing topographic features. In addition to the site's five "platform" mounds (discussed in Chapter 4), the LMS map depicts eight small rises or "house mounds," ranging from .3 m to 2 m in height. Six of the eight are located along the perimeter of a large plaza area, defining its boundaries to the east, south, and west. The remaining two are located away from the plaza, one between Mounds B and D in the northeastern quadrant of the site and the other well to the south of the plaza.

In addition to mapping, Ford and Griffin made an “adequate” surface collection (Phillips 1970:940) from Parchman, noting a relative scarcity of pottery but quite a lot of daub (Steponaitis et al. 2002). Based on their initial ceramic seriation, Phillips et al. (1951:51) placed Parchman Place late in their “B-A” or Late through Terminal Mississippian period. These same surface collections, along with those from the Carson, Salomon, Dundee, and West sites were later used by Phillips to define the Parchman phase, essentially representing the late Mississippi period occupation in the northern half of present-day Coahoma County and adjacent portions of Tunica and Quitman Counties, Mississippi. Phillips (1970:938) describes the Parchman phase as “ill-defined” and “unusually tentative,” and the situation is little improved despite the best efforts of subsequent researchers (Brain 1988; Brown 2008; Lansdell 2009; Starr 1984; Stevens 2008 [see also Belmont 1961]).

Parchman was next recorded by William Haag in 1950. His notes and a rough sketch map comprise the Mississippi Site File records for Parchman. Significantly, Haag notes that Parchman had more polychrome than at any other site he had visited (Haag 1950). His map, though not as accurate as the LMS plane table map, nonetheless has some features in common with it (Figure 1.6.). Haag identifies three of the platform mounds recorded on the LMS map, including Mounds A and B. The small mound attached to the western edge of Mound A is drawn as an apron-like protrusion, rather than a mound (an interpretation possibly shared with the LMS researchers). Haag also records two mounds on the southwestern periphery of the plaza that possibly correspond to two of the LMS house mounds. The small mound located north of Mound B is labeled “Mound C” on Haag’s map (mounds on the LMS map were not labeled, though their heights were noted). The westernmost platform mound at the site is not recorded on Haag’s map.

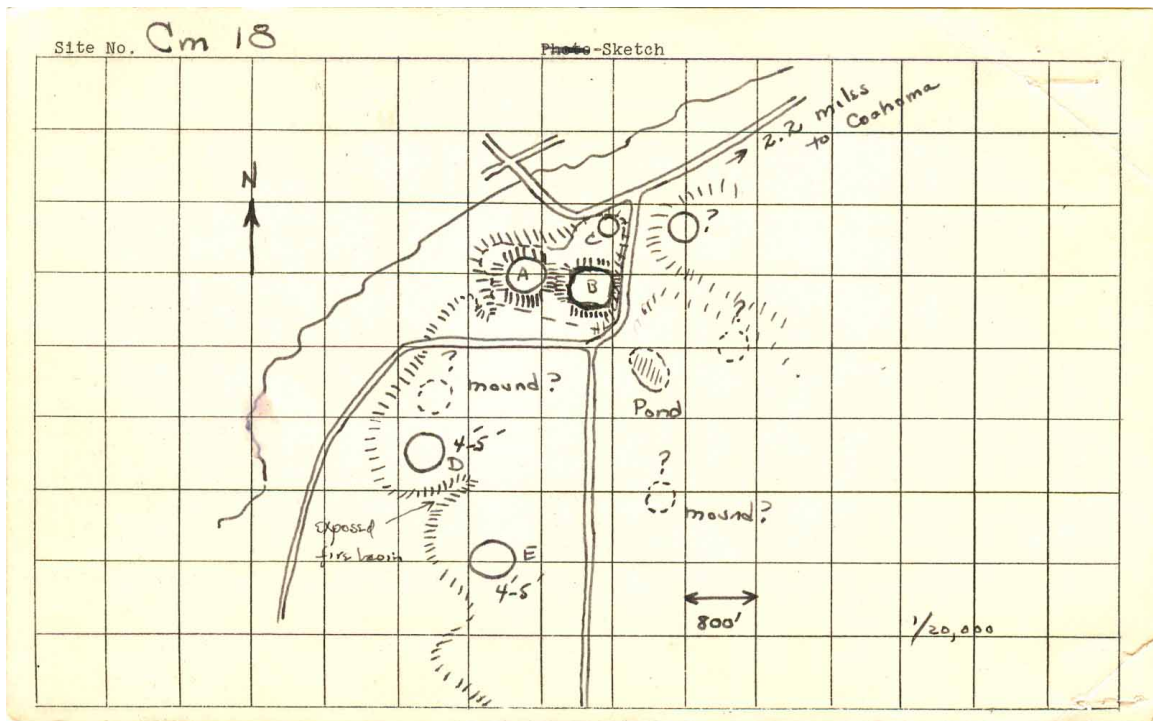


Figure 1.6. Parchman Place (22CO511), Coahoma County, Mississippi. 1950 sketch map produced by William Haag. Image courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH).

This omission is something of a mystery since the mound is present on later maps and is still clearly visible.

Unfortunately, there is some confusion in the lettering of mounds at the site. Since beginning their work at Parchman in 2002, University of Mississippi researchers have letter designation. This usage was entrenched by the time I became aware of Haag's map, referred to the westernmost mound as Mound C, while the northernmost did not have a which designated the northernmost mound as "Mound C." I have chosen to follow the University of Mississippi convention of referring to the westernmost mound as Mound C. I refer to the northernmost as Mound D and to the mound attached to the western edge of Mound A as Mound E. These designations have been published as such in a recent article (Nelson 2014).

In 1977, Ian Brown of the LMS conducted additional surface collections on and around the mounds at Parchman as part of a survey of sites in Coahoma County sponsored by the Cottonlandia Museum of Greenwood, Mississippi (Brown 1978). He also produced a sketch map (Figure 1.7). Brown's map includes the westernmost mound that was omitted by Haag, which he designates Mound F (now called Mound C). Like others, Brown also comments on the abundance of both surface daub and polychrome pottery at Parchman, though he notes an uneven distribution of ceramics across the site generally. Brown also asserts that the negligible Baytown

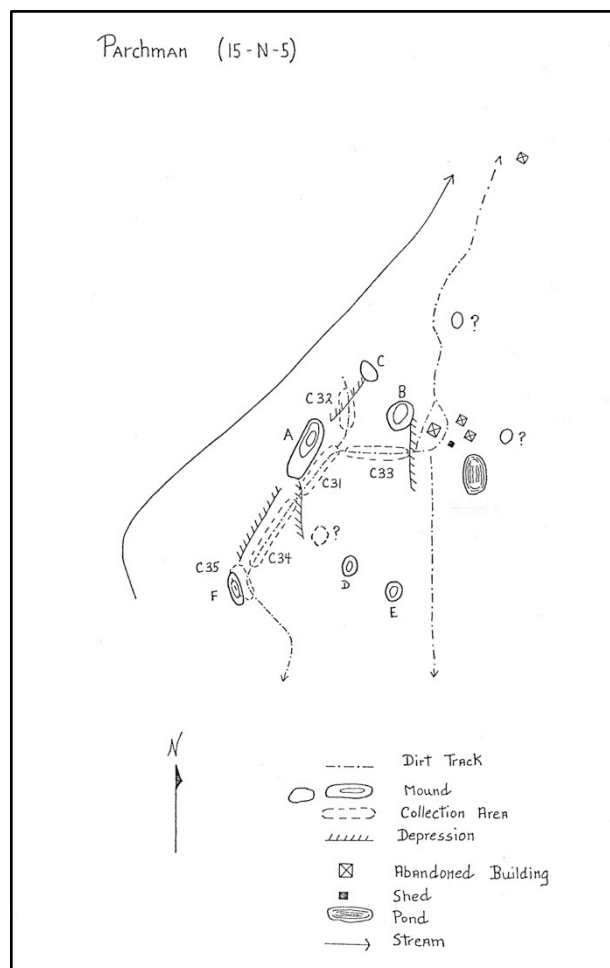


Figure 1.7. Parchman Place (22CO511), Coahoma County, Mississippi. 1977 sketch map produced by Ian Brown of the Lower Mississippi Survey (LMS) (Brown 1978: Figure 2).



period component here represents “an unusual absence in this part of the country” (Brown 1978:5).

Finally, members of the Mississippi Archaeological Survey (MAS), Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) have conducted surface collections and done additional recording and salvage work at the site since the 1960s. Starr (1984) has compared the MDAH surface collections to those of the two LMS collections just discussed and concludes that the collections accord well with one another. All three collections are further discussed in Chapter 2 of this work. In 1970, a preliminary report by Connaway and McGahey (1970) reports that Mound B had been bulldozed to a height of approximately 8 feet (2.4 m), though it was originally recorded by the LMS as being only 6 feet (1.8 m). Mound B was damaged again in 1984, when a backhoe was used to remove a small portion of the southeast edge of the mound for fill. The backhoe cut exposed a burned Mississippian structure approximately one meter above the base of the mound (well below the summit). A sample of charred thatch recovered by Connaway (1985b:2) returned a date of cal 340 ± 95 BP (A complete list of C14 dates from Parchman can be found in Table 6.1). Also in 1984, an MDAH crew consisting of Connaway, Sam Brookes, Fair Hays, and Mary Evelyn Starr mapped a series of discrete daub scatters that were outcropping along the eastern edge of the plaza. They interpret these as the remains of burned Mississippian houses (Connaway 1984b [notes on file]; Starr 1984). In Chapter 5, I provide a GIS reconstruction of the locations of these features.

Connaway (1984a) has attempted a discussion of general Parchman phase site plans and settlement patterns. He notes the appearance of a formal village plan at Parchman phase sites such as Wilsford, Parchman, and Salomon. He also discusses a possible regional settlement pattern model, which is based in part on Brain’s (1978) discussion of primary, secondary, and

tertiary ceremonial centers (and various smaller site types) in the southern Yazoo Basin. While this configuration is taken for a general model, Connaway expresses some doubt about its applicability, noting that Brain's criteria for categorizing various site types, namely mound height, does not hold up for Parchman phase sites in the northern Yazoo Basin (Connaway 1984a:83). This is not surprising as a number of researchers have noted that archaeological patterns in the southern Yazoo seem to differ considerably from those in the northern Yazoo (Kidder 1998; Phillips 1970; Riser 2009). In fact, Parchman phase settlement may follow a pattern similar to that of the Nodena and Parkin phases, described by Morse and Morse (1998) as "nucleated." However, lack of evidence for fortifications at Parchman phase sites suggests that populations were not necessarily coming together for purposes of defense, as suggested by Phyllis Morse (1981, 1990) for Parkin phase peoples. In any case, Connaway rightly points out that in addition to spatial relationships, temporal relationships among Parchman phase sites need to be worked out to more fully address the implications of the observed settlement pattern.

Most recently, Jay Johnson and his students (Johnson 2003, 2005; Lowe 2005; Lowe and Fogel 2007a, 2007b; Fogel 2005; Johnson and Haley 2006; Nelson 2014; Stevens 2006, 2008; Strickland 2009; see also Finger 2003) have undertaken geophysical exploration and excavations at Parchman. The results of these investigations, conducted from 2002-2006, as well as those directed by me from 2009-2011 are discussed briefly here and in more detail in the chapters that follow.

Beginning in 2002, Jay Johnson directed five University of Mississippi field schools at Parchman. The work included mapping, near-surface geophysical investigations, and ground-truthing of geophysical anomalies. Excavations were placed to intersect particularly strong and/or well-defined subsurface anomalies located on the summits of Mounds A and E, at the

base and on the side-slope of Mound E, and in residential areas in the south plaza and the swale located between Mounds A and B (Figure 1.8). In every case these excavations uncovered the remains of burned Mississippian structures, in most cases stacked one on top of the next.

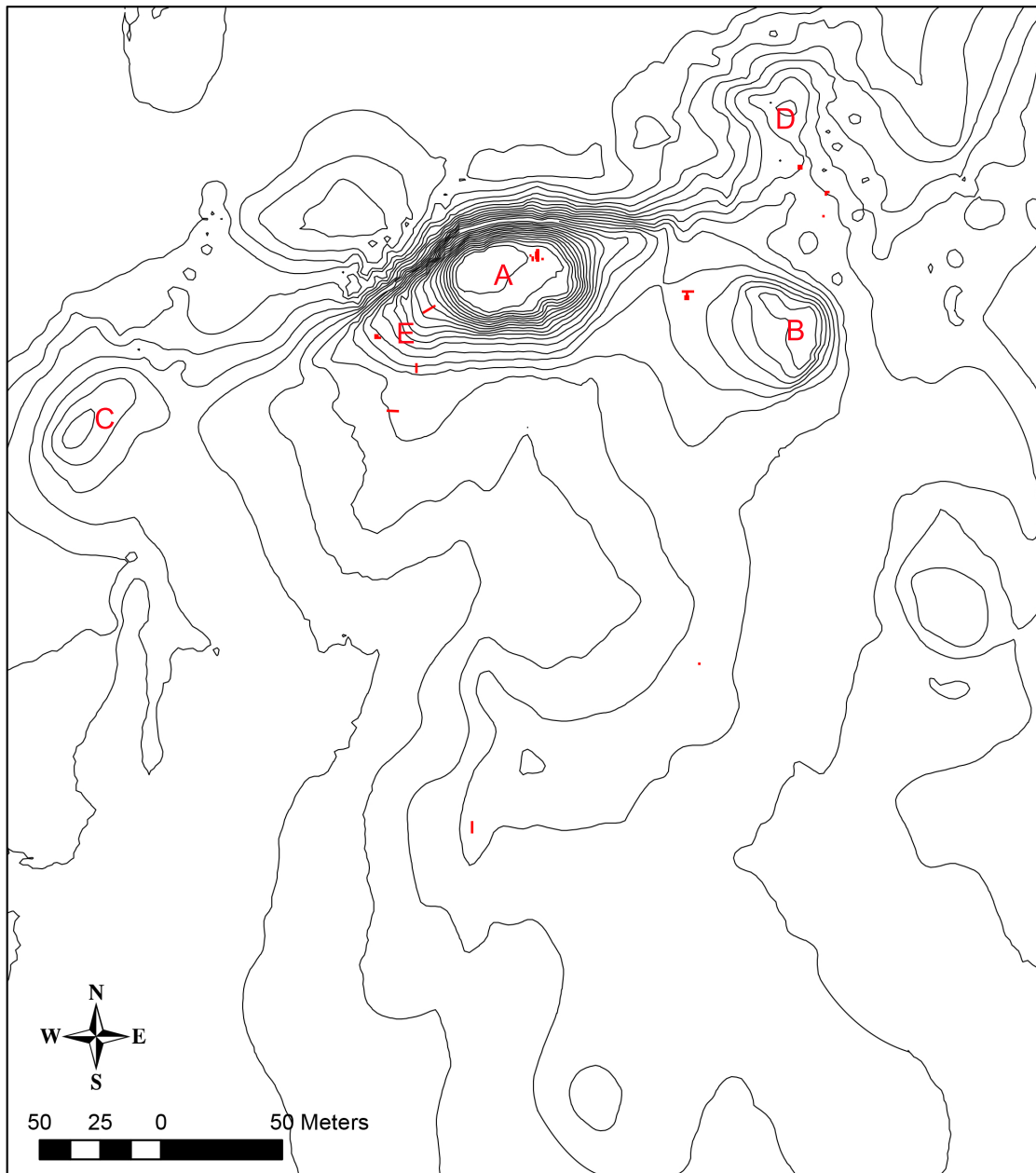


Figure 1.8. Parchman Place (22CO511), Coahoma County, Mississippi. Topographic map showing excavations from 2002 to 2011.

Excavations in mound contexts also revealed a number of differing construction techniques (discussed in detail in Chapter 4) and determined that Mounds A and E began as individual constructions that were later conjoined.

From 2009-2011, I directed additional archaeological work at Parchman, including magnetic gradiometry survey, controlled surface collections, coring, and excavation. In January of 2009, Bryan Haley and I extended the area covered by the earlier geophysical survey to include the portion of the site located northeast of Mound A, where we located a previously unknown residential area of the site. Guided by these and the results of previous surveys, I placed excavations in three residential areas of the site and in the summit of Mound D (Figure 1.8). I also extracted core samples from Mounds C and D as well as the former locations of house mounds mapped by the LMS crew but no longer visible. Finally, I conducted controlled surface collections in the plowed portions of the site.

While these investigations are treated in more detail in later chapters, I give brief descriptions of analysis units associated with each excavation area in Table 1.1. These analysis units form the basic units for the ceramics analyses presented in Chapters 2 and 3 and are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 4 and 5, which focus on mound and off-mound excavations, respectively. In most cases, I defined analysis units as fill episodes bounded by interfaces that represent living surfaces. For mound contexts, therefore, analysis units typically correspond to discrete episodes of mound construction separated by structure floors. In some cases, difficulties in excavating complicated mound stratigraphy meant that artifacts belonging to multiple mound construction stages were mixed during collection. In these cases, a single analysis unit may represent multiple construction stages, as in the case of Analysis Unit A from

the Mound E Summit excavation. I followed the same principles in assigning analysis units for excavations in residential areas.

Table 1.1. Analysis Units for excavated contexts from Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Excavation Area  | Analysis Unit | Description of deposit or interface                                     | C14 (cal BP)  |
|------------------|---------------|---|---------------|
| Mound E Base     | B             | Lensed and basket-loaded mound fill; loose topsoil                      |               |
|                  | –             | Fired floor with wall trench; daub and thatch                           |               |
|                  | A             | Lensed and basket-loaded mound fill                                     | 597 +/- 38 BP |
| Mound E SW Slope | D             | Mound fill; white ash/kaolin; loose topsoil                             |               |
|                  | –             | Surface with bowl; daub rubble  |               |
|                  | C             | Mound fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Structure with post holes; daub rubble and thatch                       | 500 +/- 38 BP |
|                  | B             | Mound fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Mound surface; daub rubble and thatch; mussel shell                     | 587 +/- 38 BP |
| Mound E Summit   | A             | Basket-loaded mound fill  |               |
|                  | E             | Mound fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Fired floor [Floor 1] with wall trench and post                         |               |
|                  | E             | Mound fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Fired floor [Floor 2] with wall trenches and posts                      |               |
|                  | D             | Mound fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Fired floor [Floor 3] with possible wall trench; daub rubble and thatch | 390 +/- 40 BP |
|                  | C             | Clean mound fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Fired floor [Floor 4] with wall trenches and posts; daub rubble         |               |
|                  | B             | Mound fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Floor? ["missing floor"] with wall trench and pit                       |               |
|                  | A             | Mound fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Truncation event  |               |
|                  | –             | Fired floor [Floor 5] with double wall trench and posts                 |               |
|                  | A             | Mound fill; white mantles (kaolin, ash, mussel shell)                   |               |
| Mound A Summit   | –             | Fired floor [Floor 6] with wall trench; daub rubble and thatch          | 470 +/- 40 BP |
|                  | A             | Mound fill  |               |
|                  |               |   |               |
| Mound A Summit   | A             | Mound fill; disturbed topsoil   |               |
|                  | –             | Floor surface? [Structure 1] with wall trench                           | 350 +/- 30 BP |
|                  | A             | Mound fill  |               |
| Mound D Summit   |               | Fired floor [Structure 2]; Daub rubble and thatch                       |               |
|                  | A             | Mound fill; disturbed plow zone   |               |
|                  | –             | Surface [Structure 1] with wall trench                                  | 478 +/- 38 BP |
|                  | A             | Mound fill  |               |
| Neighborhood 1   | –             | Surface [Structure 2] with wall trenches                                |               |
|                  | D             | Fill; disturbed plow zone   |               |
|                  | –             | Surface?; pot sherds  | 482 +/- 38 BP |
|                  | D             | Clay cap; Fill  |               |
|                  | –             | Surface indicated by pit  |               |
|                  | C             | Clay cap  |               |
|                  | –             | Surface with wall trench and pit  |               |
|                  | B             | Fill; Ash layers  |               |
| Neighborhood 1   | A             | Original surface; ceramics and faunal remains                           | 640 +/- 30 BP |

Table 1.1. cont.

| Excavation Area                | Analysis Unit | Description of deposit or interface   | C14 (cal BP)  |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---|---------------|
| Neighborhood 2                 | B             | Fill; disturbed plow zone   |               |
|                                | –             | Fired floor [Floor 2] with wall trench and posts; daub rubble                                   |               |
|                                | A             | Fill  |               |
|                                | –             | Fired floor with wall trench, posts and hearth [Floor 1]; daub rubble, roof beams, cane matting | 547 +/- 38 BP |
| Neighborhood 3<br>(Unit 10-4)  | A             | Zoned fill  |               |
|                                | –             | Surface or floor with wall trench   |               |
|                                | A             | Zoned fill  |               |
|                                | –             | Floor with posts; daub rubble   |               |
|                                | A             | Zoned fill  |               |
|                                | –             | Surface or floor  |               |
|                                | A             | Zoned fill  |               |
|                                | –             | Surface or floor  |               |
|                                | A             | Fill  |               |
|                                | –             | Surface with posts; thatch  |               |
|                                | A             | Subsoil mixed with ash  | 505 +/- 38 BP |
| Neighborhood 3<br>(Unit 11-13) | A             | Disturbed plow zone   |               |
|                                | –             | Surface with pot break;; thatch   |               |
|                                | A             | Mottled fill  | 446 +/- 38 BP |
|                                | –             | Surface or floor with post  |               |
| Neighborhood 4                 | A             | Disturbed plow zone   |               |
|                                | –             | Fired floor with wall trench and pit  |               |
|                                | A             | Clean fill  |               |
|                                | –             | Fired floor with wall trench; fired wall fragment; burned beam                                  |               |
| A-B Swale                      | C             | Disturbed plow zone   |               |
|                                | –             | Fired floor; post with clay reinforcement; jar; daub rubble                                     | 570 +/- 60 BP |
|                                | B             | Mottled fill  |               |
|                                | –             | Structure?  |               |
|                                | A             | Striated fill with ash, mussel shell, and ceramics  |               |
|                                | A             | Clayey fill; possible midden  | 609 +/- 39 BP |

## Overview

The following chapters explore community-building activities employed by people living at Parchman during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries through the lens of several different material practices. In Chapter 2, I consider ceramics recovered from excavated contexts as well as surface collections with a view of refining the ceramic chronology for Parchman. I classified ceramics

according to the type-variety system established for the region by Phillips (1970) and subsequently refined by other researchers. Because the type-variety system relies primarily on features related to paste, temper, and decorative treatment to the exclusion of other potentially temporally sensitive markers, I also conducted an analysis of vessel attributes that crosscut types and varieties. These include rim form and treatment, and the presence and type of appendages such as lugs, handles, and nodes. A correspondence analysis of the resulting classifications demonstrates that the ceramic assemblage from Parchman can be split into two sub-assemblages, one corresponding roughly to the 14<sup>th</sup> century occupation and another to the 15<sup>th</sup> century occupation. Refining the ceramic chronology at Parchman is an important step in beginning to understand the relations among people at the site and within the region, and how those relationships changed over time.

In Chapter 3, I present the results of a functional analysis of ceramic vessels from Parchman in order to discern food-related activities that took place at the site. Foodways are an important means by which people express individual and group identities and food related activities can be used to create community ties or alternatively, to make social distinctions among people. In other words, they are an important and multivalent aspect of community making. I first discuss the ways in which formal vessel attributes affect vessel performance and how these relate to historically documented southeastern Indian foodways. Then I relate the results of the functional analysis of Parchman vessels, which included recording basic and secondary shape, size (measured by orifice diameter), and use alteration. Along with attributes discussed in the previous chapter, including ware and temper, rim and handle morphology, and decorative embellishment, the results of these analyses reveal much about the composition of the vessel assemblage at Parchman, and thus about the food-related practices that took place here. A

number of types and sizes of jars, bowls, and bottles are identified based on these attributes. With the aid of a correspondence analysis, I also identified two distinct functional assemblage types that occur at Parchman. The first is a domestic assemblage characterized by a combination of cooking, serving, and storage vessels suitable for everyday use. The second is a serving assemblage characterized by both very large and very small vessels. I interpret serving assemblages as evidence of community feasting events related to the commencement of mound building at the site.

Chapter 4 is concerned with monumental constructions at Parchman. Following a short review of some ways archaeologists have characterized Mississippian mound building, I describe the results of geophysical survey, excavation, and coring of mound contexts at the site. In particular, Mounds A and E have been the subject of the most intensive excavations at Parchman and form the basis of a section on the history of mound building at the site, supplemented by radiocarbon dates and limited information available from other mound investigations. The excavations reveal a complicated social and political history that is directly tied to practices associated with mound building. Evidence of feasting, mantle construction, building and dismantling of summit structures, and use of specific sediments and substances as well as acts of truncation, expansion, and incorporation combine to reveal the ways that leadership and authority were intertwined with community values.

In Chapter 5 I move away from the mounds to explore residential areas of the site, incorporating data from historic maps, geophysical survey, excavation, coring, GIS reconstruction of mapped surface features, and controlled surface collections. Much of the chapter focuses on exploring the results of near-surface geophysical investigations at the site, particularly the results of magnetometry, which reveal a number of buried Mississippian



structures arranged into discrete residential areas or neighborhoods. I discuss the spatial organization of these neighborhoods with special attention to the empty spaces that organize surrounding architecture and the social activities and relationships these features promote. Stepping back to look at the site as a whole, I also consider the spatial relationships of neighborhoods to other site features, including mounds, the central plaza, and other neighborhoods. Another significant portion of the chapter is dedicated to the description and interpretation of excavations and coring activities in several residential areas of the site, which, along with radiocarbon dates, form the basis of a discussion on the history of residential use. Taken together, these lines of evidence indicate the ways that the people living at Parchman identified themselves with one another and with their community as a whole, as well as the ways they made social distinctions among themselves at various points in time.

The sixth and final chapter ties together the results of analyses presented in the preceding chapters. I begin by synthesizing the ways that people living at Parchman practiced various forms of community building at different scales. To do so, I draw on archaeological and ethnographic evidence to consider how people may have lived and interacted with their nearest neighbors both within their neighborhoods (or house groups) and within the site (or town) as a whole. I also consider how Parchman's inhabitants negotiated aspects of leadership and authority within their town at various points in time. Broadening the lens, I then explore how Parchman's inhabitants may have been part of communities that extend beyond the immediately local—that are regional or even cosmological in scope. To conclude, I reconstruct the history of the Parchman community, beginning with its founding in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and continuing through the site's abandonment in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CERAMICS AT PARCHMAN: CHRONOLOGY**

The goals of this chapter are concerned with describing the ceramics assemblage at Parchman with an eye toward refining regional and site-specific chronology. First, I characterize the Parchman ceramic assemblage in such a way that it can be compared with assemblages of other sites in the region by recording types, varieties, and attributes, many of which have distinct temporal and spatial distributions. This goal is broadly aligned with a long-standing attempt by archaeologists in the Lower Mississippi Valley (LMV) to figure out what happened, when and where: “until a certain amount of order has been achieved in respect to time-space relations on a regional scale, it may be questioned whether satisfactory cultural inferences can be drawn from any archaeological materials” (Phillips et al. 1951:61). As discussed in Chapter 1, the northern Yazoo was densely occupied during the late Mississippi period, and we still have a very limited understanding of how these late period sites are related to one another. Are Parchman phase sites actually contemporary, or do they only appear to be so because our ability to date them is unrefined? How are Parchman phase sites related to neighboring late period phases?

A second and closely related goal is to compare sub-assemblages from various contexts at Parchman in order to make chronological refinements on the scale of the single site. Using similar methods (discussed below), I make several intra-assemblage comparisons. First, I compare the surface collected assemblage from 2002-2011 with previous surface collections that have formed the basis for formulating and refining the Parchman phase thus far. I then compare

the surface collected assemblage with that of excavated contexts to see if surface collected ceramics are representative of the entire assemblage. As we will see, excavation and radiocarbon dates from Parchman suggest that occupation of the site was short in archaeological terms. Therefore, it is possible that the surface collection does represent a single component. Alternatively, the surface collection could be masking chronological variation. The next step, therefore, is to compare contexts for which we have stratigraphic control with one another to see if there are any stratigraphically significant changes in the overall assemblage through time. These analyses are aided by a suite of radiocarbon dates from both mound and residential contexts as well as a correspondence analysis of ceramic types and varieties recovered by excavation. Before presenting the methods, results, and interpretations of my analyses, some background on the history of ceramics research at Parchman is in order.

### **Previous Research on Ceramics at Parchman**

Parchman Place is the type site for the Parchman phase, as originally defined by Phillips, where the term “phase” refers to “a geographically coherent group of site locations ... occupied simultaneously or nearly so by local units of a specific socio-political group” (Phillips 1970:524). Archaeological phases in the Yazoo Basin and elsewhere are largely defined on the basis of similarities among ceramic assemblages recovered from various archaeological sites. This is precisely the work that the type-variety system was designed to do, and where it makes its most important contribution to archaeology (see below).

Based on surface collections from the Parchman, Carson, Salomon, Dundee, and West sites, Phillips describes the Parchman phase as “ill-defined” and “unusually tentative” (Phillips

1970:938, 940). Unfortunately, and despite considerable effort by subsequent researchers, this situation has been little remedied since the time of Phillips's writing. This no doubt reflects the difficulties of making divisions that are largely based on relative frequencies of pottery types as well as the fact that the northern Yazoo Basin was so intensely occupied during the Late Mississippian period. Despite their shortcomings, phase designations are the basis for our understanding of both spatial and temporal variation in prehistory and we could do little without them. Mainfort (2005:66) cautions against pigeonholing data into existing constructs, however, and urges us to revise existing site groupings as new data become available. There have been a few notable attempts at refining the cultural chronology of the northern Yazoo Basin.

As formulated by Phillips, the Parchman phase shows "approximately even proportions of Mississippi Plain, *var. Neeley's Ferry* and Bell Plain (rim counts)" and "a marked predominance of Barton Incised over Parkin Punctated." Walls Engraved, *var. Hull* is consistently present, and Old Town Red and other painted types are also well represented. The phase is also marked by the presence of southern types, including Owens Punctated and Leland Incised (Phillips 1970:939-940). As originally constructed, the Parchman phase is considered late Mississippian in age, though Phillips expresses some reluctance in assigning a chronological position to a rather under-developed phase (Phillips 1970:939-40; Phillips et al. 1951:372).

Recent chronological revision in the northern Yazoo Basin is largely based on Brain's (1988) reconstruction of late prehistoric-protohistoric Tunica movements. Brain's phase designations differ to varying degrees from Phillips's original definitions. Brain also deviates from Phillips in recognizing two ceramic components at Parchman. The earlier of the two is the Hushpuckena I (sub)phase, the latter the Parchman phase. (Hushpuckena I was previously subsumed in Phillips' combined Hushpuckena-Oliver phase, a formulation even Phillips

considered dubious).

Brain dates Hushpuckena I to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and describes its geographical extent as “almost exactly coterminous with modern Coahoma County and the northern half of Bolivar County (Brain 1988:266). Sites belonging to the sub-phase are Parchman, Carson, Stokes Bayou, Oliver, Myer, Bush, Merigold, and Powell Bayou. The sub-phase is again defined on the basis of its ceramic assemblage, which corresponds to what Williams and Brain (1983) term the Yazoo 5 subset of the Yazoo set, where ceramic sets “comprise a plain ware and a group of decorated varieties from one or more types” that can be recognized “as having been made by the same people for the same purposes” (Williams and Brain 1983:89). The Yazoo 5 subset is characterized by “coarsely shell-tempered jars on the exterior upper body surface of which are relatively complex incised, and often punctated, designs (Brain 1988:392). Components of the Yazoo 5 subset include Owens Punctated (vars. *Menard*, *Poor Joe*, and *Widow Creek*) and Winterville Incised var. *Ranch* (Williams and Brain 1983:324) as well as the painted types Avenue Polychrome and Nodena Red and White (Brain 1988:266).

Thus, by Brain’s chronology, Parchman Place was occupied at least as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as evidenced by a slightly different (and earlier) ceramic assemblage than the one originally described by Phillips. As we will see, the earliest radiocarbon dates from Parchman do indeed fall in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, though my own type-variety analysis of ceramics from Parchman do not indicate the presence of the Yazoo 5 subset described by Williams and Brain (see below; see also Brown 1978, 2008).

Following Phillips, most researchers consider the primary occupation at Parchman to have occurred during the Parchman phase itself, which was only slightly refined from Phillips by Starr (1984:166) on the basis of the Lower Mississippi Survey’s original surface collections as

well as additional surface collections by the LMS (Brown 1978) and the Mississippi Archaeological Survey. Starr concludes that the three data sets correspond fairly well and that Phillips's general description holds up with the new information, although some sites (notably in the Coldwater River area) should probably be excluded from the phase. Sherd counts for the assemblage collected at Parchman by the three surveys are reported in Starr (1984).

Though agreeing on the name of the phase, Brain deviates from Phillips (1970) and Starr (1984) in the character and timing of the Parchman phase. Brain tells us that by protohistoric times (1541-1673) the Parchman phase had replaced the Hushpuckena phase, occupying roughly the same region, although "the center of gravity shifted somewhat to the north" (Brain 1988:273). Brain defines the Parchman phase by the presence of the Yazoo 8 subset, which is characterized by "incisions (and punctations) arranged in simple rectilinear patterns on the exterior rim surface of widely flaring jars or complex bowls" and includes Barton Incised *vars. Davion* and *Portland*, Owens Punctated *var. Redwood*, and Winterville Incised *var. Tunica* (Brain 1988:274, 393). This definition is based on collections from the Carson group, Stokes Bayou, and Myer (Brain 1988:274).

Incidentally, Brain considers this ceramic set to mark the origin of the historic Tunica, who moved out of the Upper Sunflower region before the end of the phase (Brain 1988:277). Brain includes some 26 sites as belonging to the Parchman phase, including the Parchman site itself and the nearby Wilsford site, which has been investigated by Connaway (1984a). It is worth noting the rather wide chronological gap between the Hushpuckena I sub-phase (14<sup>th</sup> century) and the Parchman phase (protohistoric) in Brain's phase reconstruction. I believe most researchers rightly place the Parchman phase in the late prehistoric period, an argument to which we will return (McNutt 1996; Phillips 1970; Starr 1984).

Most recently, Brown (2008) has revisited the Parchman phase designation in our area of interest, noting that in surface collections from the Parchman site, Mississippi Plain ceramics “vastly outnumber” Bell Plain ceramics. This is contrary to Phillips’s assertion that the proportions of the two types are approximately even. This discrepancy is most likely due, however, to the fact that Phillips’s proportions are based on rim counts, while Brown’s and others are based on combined rim and body counts, and also to the tendency of fieldworkers in the early part of the LMS to preferentially collect decorated sherds over plain ones. Brown agrees with Phillips, however, in that Barton Incised ceramics occur in greater frequencies than Parkin Punctated ceramics, and that Walls Engraved *var. Hull* is a marker for the Parchman phase. Brown does not find evidence of southern types such as Leland Incised that were reported by Phillips et al. (1951) and Phillips (1970). Additionally, Brown (2008:382) disagrees with Brain’s placement of the Parchman phase in the protohistoric period and notes that “the markers that Brain put forth really do not seem to be very common in the region.”

These analyses serve as a starting point for my own investigation of ceramic types and varieties at Parchman and as a baseline with which to make comparisons between ceramics from surface collections and those from excavated contexts. Particularly useful for these kinds of chronological reconstructions are types and varieties with known temporal and spatial associations. Fewer studies have focused on temporal and spatial associations of ceramic attributes, though a number of these have been identified by previous researchers. Descriptions of ceramic types, varieties, and attributes discussed here can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

### *Ceramics with Known Temporal and Spatial Associations*

A few types identified in the sample are clay-tempered wares temporally associated with

the Late Woodland Baytown period. These include the super-types Baytown Plain and Mulberry Creek Cordmarked as well as the less common types Salomon Brushed, Yates Net Impressed, and Larto Red. Grace Brushed *var. Grace*, a coarse shell-tempered ware, is considered an early Mississippian type in the southern Yazoo. Based on preliminary ceramics analysis from sites in the northern Yazoo recently tested as part of the Mississippi Mound Trail project, Jay Johnson believes that clay-tempered “Baytown” varieties are being made alongside shell-tempered ones at many sites in the northern Yazoo (Jay Johnson, personal communication 2015). Therefore, the distinctions made between clay-tempered Late Woodland wares and shell-tempered Mississippian wares may not be as straightforward as we have supposed.

In terms of attributes, Belmont (1961) identifies fat or “Hushpuckena” lugs as an earlier variant of the thinner and later Oliver phase lugs (Lansdell 2009:57; Phillips 1970:941). Additionally, Smith (1969:4) tells us that at Chucalissa, nodes are an early form of handle decoration. Smith and others also note temporal change among the loopform handle series, where loop, intermediate, strap, wide strap, triangular strap, and decorative handle forms can be sorted from early to late.

Many types and varieties in the sample are temporally associated with the Late Mississippian period. These tend toward finely incised and engraved types such as Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake* and Walls Engraved *vars. Walls* and *Hull*. Many painted types are also considered to be late in the Mississippian sequence. These include Carson Red on Buff, Hollywood White/Nodena Red and White (overlapping with but later than Carson), and Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam*. Avenue Polychrome *var. Avenue* is considered very late in the sequence. As noted above, various strap-form and decorative handles are considered later than loop handles, and lugs may become smaller and thinner.



A number of ceramic types present in the Parchman assemblage have been considered by previous researchers to be either non-local in origin or to be more commonly found in other regions. The types Leland Incised *var. unspecified*, Barton Incised *vars. Estill* and *Midnight*, L'Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified*, Grace Brushed *var. Grace*, and Winterville Incised *var. Winterville* are all considered “southern types,” with origins in the southern Yazoo Basin. According to Phillips et al. (1951:117) downturned lugs are also more common further south. Additionally, small carinated bowls are typically associated with sites in the southern portion of the LMV (Phillips 1970:49).

The types Walls Engraved *var. Walls* and Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake* are northern in origin, from the area around Memphis. The beveled or “Memphis” rim is also associated with Memphis subregion and gradually declines in frequency toward the south (House 1993:27; Mainfort 2003:36-37; Phillips et al. 1951:116).

The following sections detail the methods and results of my type-variety and attribute analyses, and hopefully, offer considerable refinement to the relative chronology of the study area.

### **Methods of Analysis**

Multiple perspectives exist regarding the best approach for constructing chronologies from ceramic artifacts, and I will therefore employ a number of different methods of analysis. First, I will describe each assemblage according to the type-variety system established for use in the Lower Mississippi Valley by Phillips (1970) and subsequently refined by others (especially Williams and Brain 1983).

### *Type-variety Analysis*

The type-variety system is a binomial system of classification where ceramic *types* are groupings based on similarity in paste, temper and decorative treatment. Typically, a number of decorated types are associated with a few plain ware types. For example, in the northern Yazoo Basin, the common decorated types Barton Incised and Parkin Punctated are virtually always found on a paste equivalent to the plain ware Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* (cf. the idea of “sets” put forth by Williams and Brian 1983:88). Once the ware has been determined, ceramics are further sorted into types based on the technique and implements used to decorate them (fine-line incision, fingernail punctation, etc.) as well as the overall “characteristic decorative idea,” (Phillips 1970:27), which includes design motifs (zoned triangles, curvilinear festoons, etc.) as well as placement on the vessel (shoulder-treatment, all-over, etc.). As a rule, types should be sortable from sherds—whole or nearly whole vessels are not required. Further, every sherd *should be* sorted to type, even if the type is “unclassified,” so as to completely incorporate all the available data into the classification.

*Varieties*, on the other hand, are variants of a type considered to have finer-scale chronological or spatial significance. Criteria for sorting them can include design and form characteristics not encompassed by type descriptions. Unlike types, varieties are not always sortable from sherds, either because the sherds in question are too small to display the requisite criteria, or simply because varieties grade into one another, making sorting rather arbitrary. Nor should ceramicists sort to the level of variety simply for the sake of doing so, since the usefulness of varieties depends upon their reliable association with limited amounts of time and space. Phillips expects that varieties (unlike types) may have some relationship with particular cultural units (Phillips 1970:27), but cautions against viewing this relationship in terms of

cultural *behavior*. Rather, it is a matter of *relationships*: “types, varieties, and modes are vehicles for the expression of cultural and historical relationships. The emphasis on their formal attributes is a matter of prior necessity only because we usually have to formulate these units before we know precisely what the cultural and historical relationships are” (Phillips 1970:23). In other words, ceramics can be used to determine time and space relationships among archaeological sites or site components, a necessary first step in reconstructing relationships among prehistoric social groups and a main goal of future research in the northern Yazoo.

Following the procedure outlined above, I classified each sherd greater than one quarter inch recovered at Parchman since 2002 to type and where possible, to variety, on the basis of criteria described by Phillips (1970) and refined by a number of others (Brain 1988, Brain 1989, Brain et al. 1995; Williams and Brain 1983). Type and variety designations used in this work are described in Appendix 1, along with their relevant sources. When necessary, I have also described how types and/or varieties at Parchman differ from established descriptions.

### *Attribute Analysis*

The type-variety system of classification focuses mainly on variation in paste, temper, and method of decoration to the exclusion of other potentially temporally-sensitive attributes that cross-cut types and varieties. (House 1991, 1993; Mainfort 2003; Phillips 1970; Smith 1969; Williams and Brain 1983). A number of researchers have demonstrated the utility of combining attribute analysis with type-variety classification for making finer-grained temporal distinctions among ceramic assemblages in the northern Yazoo and neighboring regions. House (1991,1993), for instance, has identified a number of vessel attributes that allowed him to make fine-grained temporal distinctions among Kent phase ceramic assemblages in eastern Arkansas. Lumb and

McNutt (1988) have undertaken a similar exercise at the Walls phase Chucalissa site in western Tennessee, while Smith (1969) has considered temporal variation in ceramic handle styles at Chucalissa. Mainfort (1999, 2003, 2004, 2005) has used frequencies of rim attributes to evaluate the validity of Phillips' late Mississippian Parkin, Kent, Walls and Nodena phases (see also McNutt 2008). Even closer to home, Lansdell (2009) has had some success in seriating surface collected ceramics from the nearby Carson group using a combination of paste, temper, decoration, vessel shape, and rim and handle modes. To see if similar results could be obtained from the Parchman sample, I made a number of observations on rim sherds in addition to type and variety. Specifically, I recorded information on rim form, lip treatment, and presence and type of appendages such as handles, nodes and lugs. Ceramic attributes present in the study are described in Appendix 2.

### *Correspondence Analysis*

I conducted a correspondence analysis of typed ceramics from excavated contexts at Parchman using the statistical package STATA 13. Correspondence analysis is a multivariate statistical method that calculates chi-square distances between observed and expected values associated with two variables. The analysis begins with a contingency table consisting of row and column variables. In this case, the row variables were excavated contexts (e.g. analysis units—see Table 1.2) and the column variables were counts of ceramic types/varieties associated with those contexts. The calculated chi-square distances are then converted to Euclidian distances, which can be plotted in two-dimensional space, resulting in a biplot that represents the relationship or correspondence between the two sets of variables. Contexts that are more similar plot closely together while those that are dissimilar plot further away from one another. Row or

column variables with high associated counts exert more influence (or mass) on the results.

Correspondence analysis (CA) is best practiced as an iterative process. Accordingly, I started by including all excavated contexts with primary deposition and/or associated radiocarbon dates as row data, and counts of all ceramic types found in those contexts as column data. After running the analysis, I examined the resulting statistical output as well as the scatterplots to determine which variables were exerting the most influence on the first two dimensions. Row and column variables that had little influence (low mass) or were inaccurately plotted (low overall quality) were excluded from the next iteration of the process and so forth until arriving at the final version.

## **Results**

Controlled surface collections and excavations conducted since 2002 have resulted in the largest sample from a Parchman phase site to date. The overall ceramic sample summarized here is comprised of three separate collections: (1) ceramics excavated from mound and neighborhood excavations described in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively; (2) 2009 surface collections from Neighborhoods 1, 2, and 3; and (3) controlled surface collections from the entire site collected in 2010 and 2011. The bulk of the assemblage consists of fragmentary sherds recovered from primary midden deposits, redeposited mound fill, and surface collections. Very few ceramic artifacts were recovered directly from residential structures, as the pattern at the site is to sweep such structures clear of debris prior to destruction by conflagration. These data form the basis of the current analysis and provide an opportunity to refine our understanding of the Parchman phase. During the analysis, all sherds in the collection were classified according to type, and

when possible, to variety. Appendix 1 gives descriptions of the criteria used to assign sherds in the type and variety classification.

The sample includes 25,808 sherds, 1,369 of which are rims. Of the total, 90.88% (23,454) are plain ware varieties, while 9.12% (2,343) are decorated. The following discussion is based on sherd counts. Sherd weights were also recorded for excavated ceramics and surface collections from 2010 and 2011, but not for 2009 surface collections. I expect that relying on counts will have a tendency to inflate percentages of course wares relative to fine wares in the assemblage (especially in the surface collected samples) because of the greater tendency for course wares to break down as a result of plowing and other site formation processes.

Before diving into the results, a note about sorting plain wares is in order. Nearly every ceramicist working in the LMV has commented on the difficulties to be found in sorting plain wares, as the two main shell-tempered types (Mississippi Plain and Bell Plain) are known to grade into one another. They certainly do so at Parchman. I have dealt with this problem by preserving a fairly conservative definition of Bell Plain as a finely made ware with hard, relatively thin vessel walls and containing temper of shell crushed so fine as to be invisible or nearly so. Burnishing is not a reliable criteria, though it is associated nearly exclusively with Bell Plain and associated decorated wares. Shell-tempered vessels and sherds that do not meet these criteria are counted as Mississippi Plain *vars. Neeley's Ferry* or *unspecified*, or in a very few cases, unidentified plain. The consequence of this is a great deal of variation in sherds that are typed as Mississippi Plain, from very coarse vessels with large temper particles, to vessels that are nearly as fine as those typed as Bell. Of course, the judgment call required in borderline cases means that the categories are more distinct than reality warrants.

Additionally, varieties have been set up in some regions to account for plain wares that

differ somewhat from the established varieties of Baytown, Mississippi, and Bell Plain. Two of these constructions are relevant to the current analysis. The first is Addis Plain, originally considered a Baytown variety by Phillips (1970:48-49). As its association with Plaquemine culture sites in the lower Yazoo and further south became better known, however, Addis Plain was established as a type (Brain 1989; Steponaitis 1974; Williams and Brain 1983; see also Livingood 2007 and Ryan 2004:91-94). Considered by Phillips (1970:49) to be “*almost* sortable,” Addis can be identified (in context) by a smoothed surface mottled by temper inclusions including clay, grit, hematite, and organic matter (excluding shell) (Brain 1989:70). However, outside the region for which it was originally described, sorting criteria are unreliable, though vessel shape and rim form may provide additional clues. Carinated bowls and jars, for instance, are closely associated with Addis paste in the southern portion of the LMV (Phillips 1970:49). Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) archaeologists counted a total of 20 Addis Plain sherds from their surface collections at Parchman (Starr 1984:187), though none were identified by LMS researchers (Brown 1977:4; Phillips 1970) who presumably are best qualified to recognize it. Oddly, Starr (1984:186) indicates that Addis was usually counted as Bell by MDAH survey crews, so it is unclear why they were counted as Addis here. In any case, I have chosen not to include Addis as a category in my type-variety analysis for reasons of unreliable sorting criteria. Two rim sherds from carinated bowls in the sample may argue against this choice, as researchers with expertise in southern varieties would likely type them as Addis (Vin Steponaitis, personal communication 2014).

Second, “following Smith’s usage,” Lumb and McNutt (1988:30-31) identified a variety of Bell Plain in collections from Chucalissa that differs from the standard definition of *var. Bell* in including sizeable temper particles composed of clay or grog in addition to fine shell. Bell

Plain *var. Nickel* outnumber *var. Bell* in early 16<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Chucalissa, indicating its later (but overlapping) chronological relationship with *var. Bell*. Clay particles are sometimes evident in Bell Plain sherds from Parchman and indeed, some sherds were sorted as *var. Nickel* by Matt Reynolds prior to my analysis. As I was unable to duplicate the sorting of *var. Nickel* I chose not to include the category and instead classify all Bell Plain sherds as *vars. Bell* or *unspecified*. I do think there may be merit in further sorting Bell Plain ceramics in the future.

### *Type-variety Analysis*

The results of the type-variety analysis indicate that undecorated or plain wares make up nearly 91% of the Parchman ceramic assemblage (Table 2.1; Figure 2.1, 2.2). Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* (n = 16,018) makes up the overwhelming majority of the sample at 62.07% of the total assemblage and 68.3% of the plain wares. Adding Mississippi Plain *var. unspecified* (n = 3919) to these figures brings the total Mississippi Plain sherd count to 19,937, making up 77.25% of the total assemblage and 85% of the plain wares. Bell Plain *var. Bell* (n = 1644) comes in at a distant second, at 6.37% of the total assemblage and 7% of the plain wares. This finding is in stark contradiction to Phillips' expectation that Parchman phase assemblages will have roughly even proportions of Mississippi and Bell Plain varieties. While some of this discrepancy may be attributed to sorting difficulties as well as the greater tendency for Mississippi Plain to break under mechanical stress, it seems wise to reconsider Phillips' results in light of this much larger sample size (see also Brown 1978).

Two other plain ware categories were recorded. The grog-tempered ware, Baytown Plain (n = 455) makes up 1.94% of the plain ware varieties (1.76% of the overall sample), while unidentified plain wares (n = 1420) make up 6.05% (5.5% of the overall assemblage).



Table 2.1. Types and varieties recovered from surface collections and excavated contexts at Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Type and variety                                  | Surface (ct) | Excavated (ct) | Total (ct)   | % of total assemblage |
|---|--------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Avenue Polychrome <i>var. Avenue</i>              | 40           | 57             | 97           | 0.38%                 |
| Barton Incised <i>var. Barton</i>                 | 442          | 409            | 851          | 3.30%                 |
| Barton Incised <i>var. Estill</i>                 | 9            | 8              | 17           | 0.07%                 |
| Barton Incised <i>var. Midnight</i>               | 2            | 3              | 5            | 0.02%                 |
| Barton Incised <i>var. Togo</i>                   | 4            | 2              | 6            | 0.02%                 |
| Barton Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>            | 24           | 4              | 28           | 0.11%                 |
| Baytown Plain <i>var. Baytown</i>                 | 323          | 132            | 455          | 1.76%                 |
| Bell Plain <i>var. Bell</i>                       | 665          | 979            | 1644         | 6.37%                 |
| Carson Red on Buff <i>var. Carson</i>             | 28           | 25             | 53           | 0.21%                 |
| Grace Brushed <i>var. Grace</i>                   | 1            | 1              | 2            | 0.01%                 |
| Hollywood White <i>var. Hollywood</i>             | 181          | 62             | 243          | 0.94%                 |
| Kimmswick Fabric Impressed <i>var. Kimmswick</i>  | 0            | 1              | 1            | 0.00%                 |
| Kinlock Simple Stamped <i>var. Kinlock</i>        | 2            | 0              | 2            | 0.01%                 |
| L'Eau Noire Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>       | 0            | 2              | 2            | 0.01%                 |
| Larto Red <i>var. Larto</i>                       | 11           | 2              | 13           | 0.05%                 |
| Leland Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>            | 5            | 8              | 13           | 0.05%                 |
| Mississippi Plain <i>var. Neeley's Ferry</i>      | 5644         | 10374          | 16018        | 62.07%                |
| Mississippi Plain <i>var. unspecified</i>         | 3897         | 22             | 3919         | 15.19%                |
| Mulberry Creek Cordmarked <i>var. unspecified</i> | 34           | 16             | 50           | 0.19%                 |
| Nodena Red and White <i>var. Nodena</i>           | 66           | 22             | 88           | 0.34%                 |
| O'Byam Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>            | 0            | 1              | 1            | 0.00%                 |
| Old Town Red <i>var. Beaverdam</i>                | 270          | 87             | 357          | 1.38%                 |
| Old Town Red <i>var. Old Town</i>                 | 47           | 13             | 60           | 0.23%                 |
| Parkin Punctated <i>var. Parkin</i>               | 49           | 115            | 164          | 0.64%                 |
| Parkin Punctated <i>var. unspecified</i>          | 11           | 7              | 18           | 0.07%                 |
| Pouncey Pinched <i>var. Pouncey</i>               | 2            | 1              | 3            | 0.01%                 |
| Rhodes Incised <i>var. Horn Lake</i>              | 6            | 2              | 8            | 0.03%                 |
| Salomon Brushed <i>var. Salomon</i>               | 0            | 1              | 1            | 0.00%                 |
| Unidentified Brushed                              | 1            | 0              | 1            | 0.00%                 |
| Unidentified Engraved                             | 3            | 12             | 15           | 0.06%                 |
| Unidentified Fabric Impressed                     | 1            | 0              | 1            | 0.00%                 |
| Unidentified Incised                              | 64           | 71             | 135          | 0.52%                 |
| Unidentified Painted                              | 3            | 1              | 4            | 0.02%                 |
| Unidentified Plain                                | 1150         | 270            | 1420         | 5.50%                 |
| Unidentified Punctated                            | 0            | 1              | 1            | 0.00%                 |
| Walls Engraved <i>var. Hull</i>                   | 17           | 18             | 35           | 0.14%                 |
| Walls Engraved <i>var. Walls</i>                  | 1            | 6              | 7            | 0.03%                 |
| Winterville Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>       | 2            | 5              | 7            | 0.03%                 |
| Winterville Incised <i>var. Winterville</i>       | 32           | 31             | 63           | 0.24%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>13037</b> | <b>12771</b>   | <b>25808</b> | <b>100.00%</b>        |



Figure 2.1. Examples of Mississippi Plain var. *Neeley's Ferry* (a., b., c.); Bell Plain var. *Bell* (d., e.); and Unidentified Plain (f., g.). The Unidentified Plain sherds are similar in paste to Addis Plain types found in the southern Yazoo Basin and Natchez Bluffs.

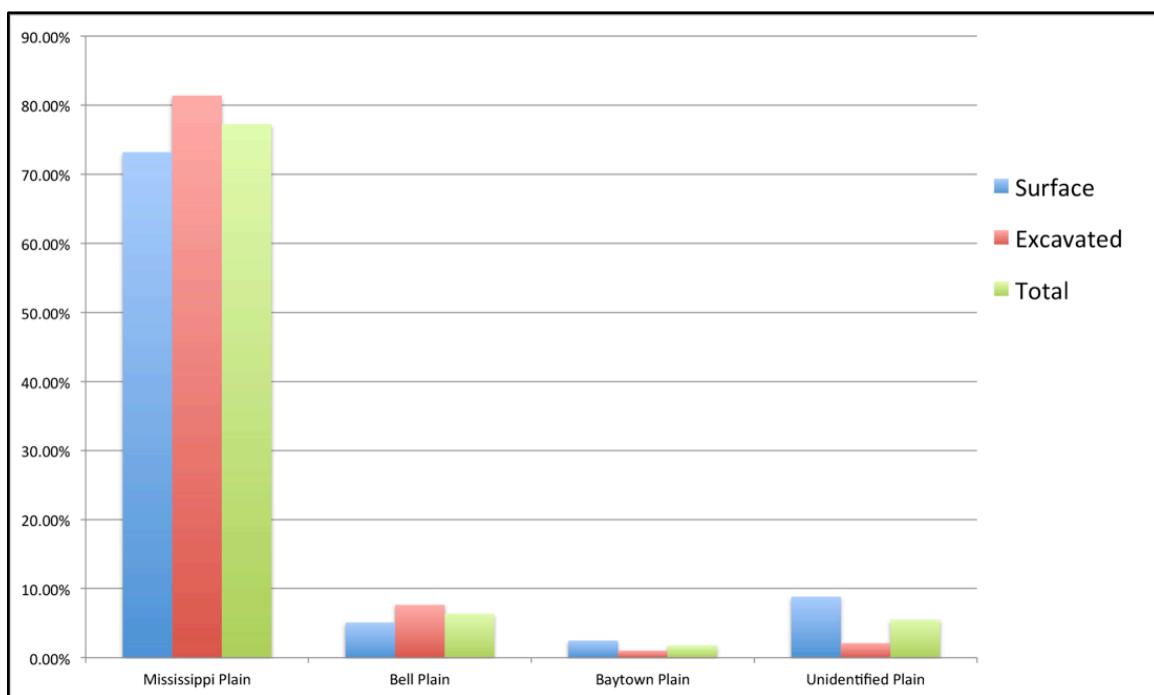


Figure 2.2. Histogram of plain wares recovered from surface collections and excavated contexts at Parchman Place (22CO511) since 2002 (shown as percentages of the total assemblage).

Decorated sherds, consisting mainly of incised, punctated, engraved, and painted types make up just under 9% of the Parchman sample (Figure 2.3). Not surprisingly, Barton Incised varieties (n = 907; Figure 2.4 & 2.5) make up the largest proportion of decorated sherds in the sample (3.51% of total sherds; 38.53% of decorated wares). Most Barton Incised sherds were classified as *var. Barton* (n = 851), but *Estill* (n = 17), *Midnight* (n = 5), and *Togo* (n = 6) were also present. Twenty-eight Barton Incised sherds could not be further classified and were therefore assigned to the *unidentified* variety. Since proportions of decorated coarse wares seem to have spatial and temporal significance, it makes sense to describe two other coarse decorated

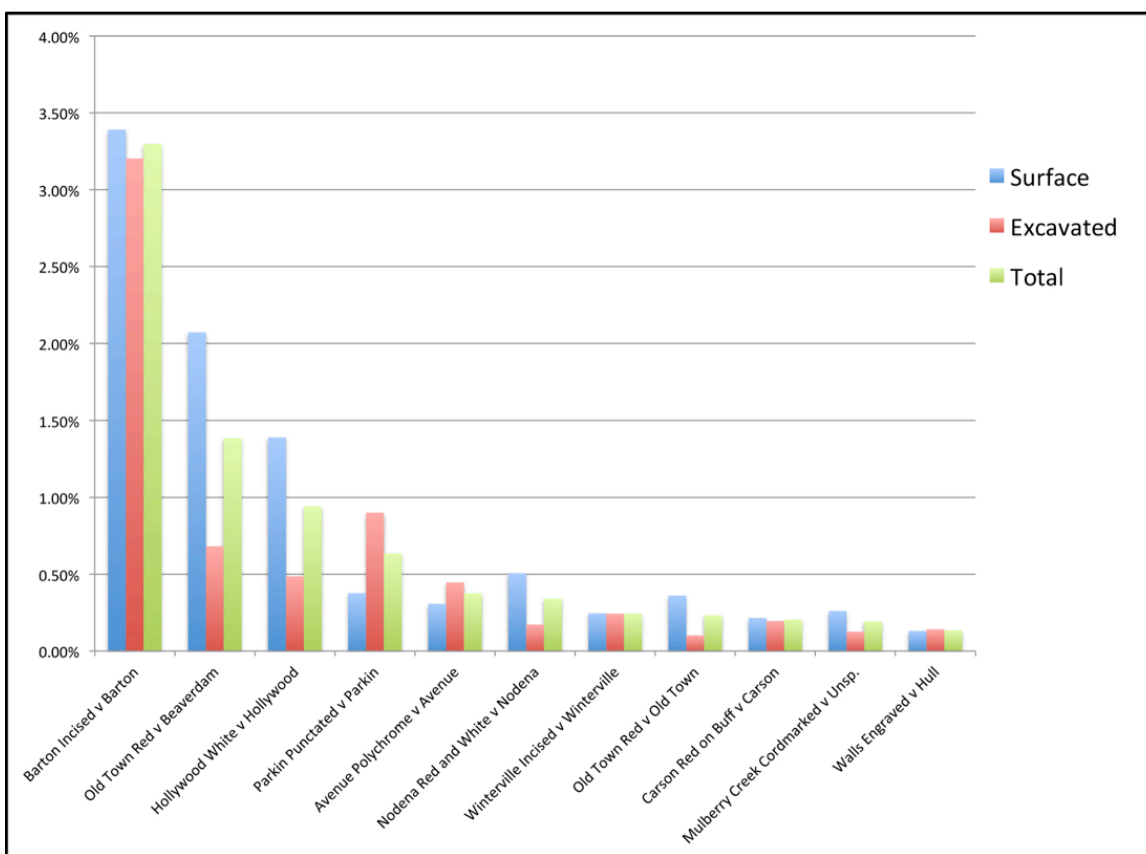


Figure 2.3. Histogram of decorated wares recovered from surface collections and excavated contexts at Parchman Place (22CO511) since 2002 (shown as percentages of the total assemblage). Varieties representing less than .10% of the total assemblage (less than 1% of the decorated assemblage) are not included.



Figure 2.4. Examples of Barton Incised var. *Barton* from Parchman Place (22CO511).



Figure 2.5. Examples of Barton Incised var. *Midnight* (a., b., c.); Barton Incised var. *Estill* (d.); Barton Incised var. *Togo* (e., f., k.); and Winterville Incised var. *Winterville* (g., h., i., j., l., m., n., o.) from Parchman Place (22CO511).



wares here, though truthfully, they are minority types in the sample. Parkin Punctated *vars.*

*Parkin* (n = 164; Figure 2.6) and *unspecified* (n = 18) make up less than 1% of the overall sample and 7.73% of the decorated wares, making the proportion of Barton to Parkin roughly 5:1.

Winterville Incised (n = 70; Figure 2.5), the more southerly, curvilinear counterpart to Barton, makes up 2.97% of the decorated sherds (less than 1% of the overall sample).

Painted wares (n = 898; Figure 2.7) make up a relatively large proportion of all decorated types, comprising 38.87% of the decorated sample. However, Larto Red, a grog-tempered type, should probably not be classed with the other painted types, which are all considered markers of

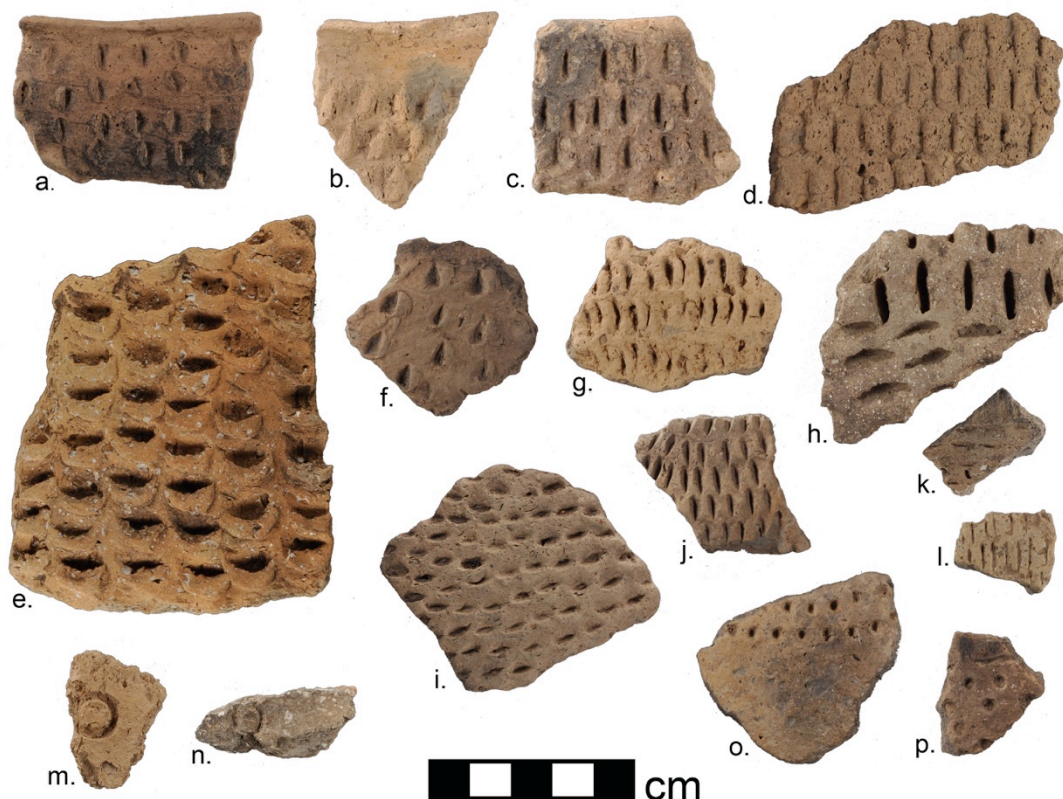


Figure 2.6. Examples of Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin* (a., b., c., d., e., f., g.); Parkin Punctated *var. unspecified* (h., i., j., m., n., o., p.); and Kinlock Simple Stamped (k., l.) from Parchman Place (22CO511).



Figure 2.7. Examples of Old Town var. *Beaverdam* (a., b.); Nodena Red and White var. *Nodena* (c., d.); Hollywood White var. *Hollywood* (e., f.); Avenue Polychrome var. *Avenue* (g., h., i., j., k., l.); Old Town Red var. *Old Town* (m., n.); and Carson Red on Buff var. *Carson* (o., p., q.) from Parchman Place (22CO511).

the late Mississippi period. Excluding the 13 examples of Larto as well as those classified as Unidentified Painted ( $n = 4$ ), painted types make up 38.15% of the decorated sample, a proportion nearly identical to that of Barton Incised. Old Town Red var. *Beaverdam* ( $n = 357$ ) is the most numerous of the shell-tempered painted types, comprising 15.17% of all decorated types and 39.76% of shell-tempered painted wares. Hollywood White is the next most numerous type represented, but is problematic because it likely represents fragments of Nodena Red and White vessels that are too small to exhibit red paint. In any case, the two types are considered by Phillips to have identical distributions. When combined, Hollywood White ( $n = 243$ ) and Nodena

Red and White (n = 88) make up 14.06% of decorated wares (10.32% Hollywood; 3.74% Nodena). Avenue Polychrome (n = 97) makes up 4.12% of the decorated sample. Though small in number, Avenue sherds are significant because of their presumed very late chronological position in the ceramic sequence. Finally, Old Town Red *var.* Old Town (n = 60) and Carson Red on Buff (n = 53) make up 2.55% and 2.25% of the decorated assemblage respectively.

Two other types exist in significant numbers in the sample (Figure 2.8). Mulberry Creek



Figure 2.8. Examples of Mulberry Creek Cordmarked *var. unspecified* (a., b.); Walls Engraved *var. Hull* (c., d., e., f., g.); Leland Incised *var. unspecified* (h., i.); Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake* (j., k.); Walls Engraved *var. Walls* (l., m.); Pouncey Pinched *var. Pouncey* (n., o.); Larto Red *var. Larto* (p., q.); Grace Brushed *var. Grace* (r., s.); L'Eau Noire Incised *var. L'Eau Noire* (t.); Unidentified Incised/Yates Net Impressed? (u.); and Unidentified Fabric Impressed/Withers Fabric Marked? (v.) from Parchman Place (22CO511).

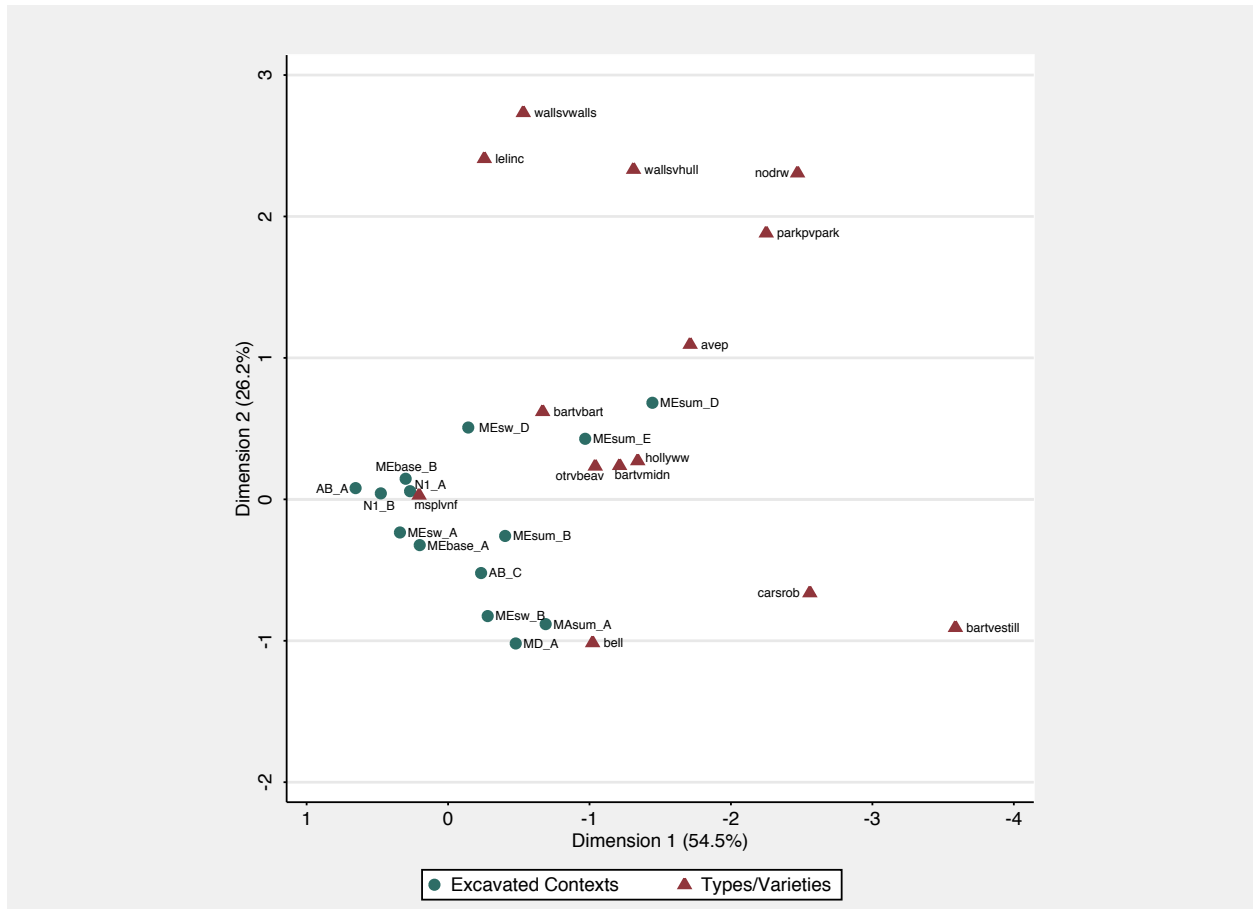


Cordmarked (n = 50) makes up 2.12% of the decorated sample, while Walls Engraved *var. Hull* (n = 35) makes up 1.49%. Finally, Larto Red (n = 13), Leland Incised (n = 13), Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake* (n = 8), Walls Engraved *var. Walls* (n = 7), Pouncey Pinched *var. Pouncey* (n = 3), Grace Brushed *var. Grace* (n = 2), Kinlock Simple Stamped *var. Kinlock* (n = 2), L' Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified* (n = 2), Kimmswick Simple Stamped *var. Kimmswick* (n = 1), O'Byam Incised *var. unspecified* (n = 1), and Salomon Brushed *var. Salomon* (n = 1) make up less than 1% each of the decorated sample. Also present are various unidentified varieties exhibiting incised, engraved, painted, punctated, brushed, and fabric impressed surface treatments. Together, these comprise 6.37% of the decorated sample.

The correspondence analysis biplot shown in Figure 2.9 plots ceramic types and varieties against excavated contexts in two-dimensional space; spatial proximity indicates the degree of similarity or correspondence of ceramic assemblages among contexts. Here, the first dimension accounts for 54.5% of the variation within the sample and the second dimension accounts for a further 26.2%. When added together, the first two dimensions account for a total of 80.7% of the variation in the sample.

Dimension 1 is overwhelmingly controlled by Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*, the dominant type, as well as the dominant plain ware in the assemblage (Figure 2.10; see Table 2.2 for statistical output and Table 2.3 for a key to abbreviations). The type forms a cluster with a number of excavated contexts near the origin of the graph. Plotting away from the origin, towards the right side of the graph, are the types (in order of their influence on the analysis as measured by squared correlation) Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin*, Avenue Polychrome *var. Avenue*, Carson Red on Buff *var. Carson*, Bell Plain *var. Bell*, Hollywood White *var. Hollywood*, Old Town Red *var. Old Town*, and Nodena Red and White *var. Nodena*. These types





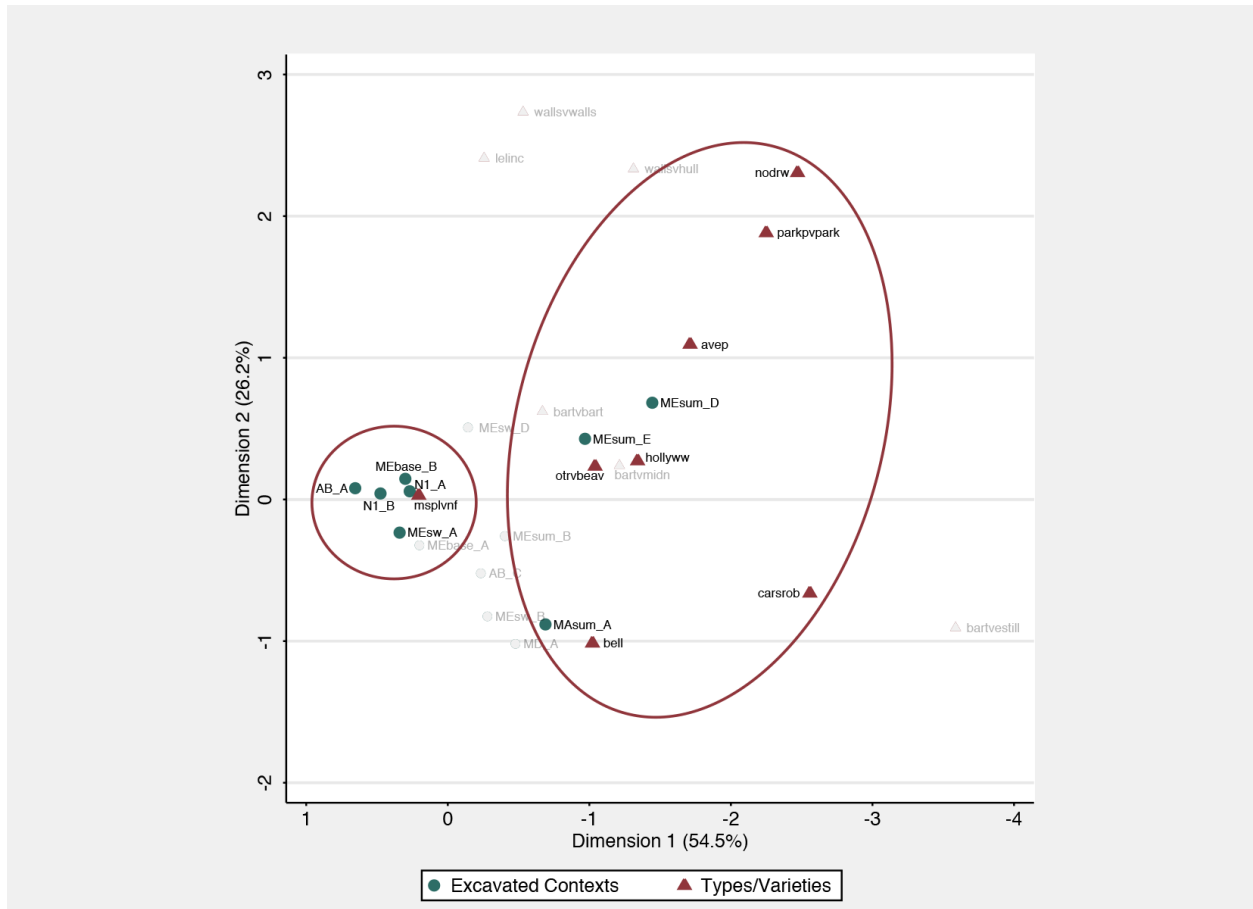


Figure 2.10. Correspondence Analysis biplot highlighting two distinct clusters along the first dimension. Dimension one separates contexts based on the presence (right cluster) or absence (left cluster) of fine, painted wares. Variables plotted in light gray are not well captured by the first dimension. A key to abbreviations used here can be found in Table 2.3.

The second dimension is more difficult to interpret, but appears to separate contexts based on differing frequencies of plain versus decorated fine wares, particularly rare engraved and incised varieties (Figure 2.11). Toward the bottom of the graph, a number of contexts cluster with Bell Plain *var.* Bell. Plotting near the top at the opposite end of the graph from Bell are (in order of their squared correlation value) Walls Engraved *var.* Hull, Leland Incised, Nodena Red and White, Parkin Punctated, and Walls Engraved *var.* Walls. Avenue Polychrome and Barton Incised *var.* Barton are also pulled in this direction, though Barton's overall quality is low. These varieties appear to pull three contexts from Mound E away from the group that clusters with

Table 2.2. Statistical output from STATA for correspondence analysis.

```
Correspondence analysis
Number of obs      =    7745
Pearson chi2(169)  =  1020.24
Prob > chi2        =    0.0000
Total inertia      =    0.1317
Number of dim.     =     2
Expl. inertia (%)  =   80.72

14 active rows
14 active columns
```

| Dimension | singular<br>value | principal<br>inertia | chi2    | percent | cumul<br>percent |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|------------------|
| dim 1     | .268055           | .0718535             | 556.51  | 54.55   | 54.55            |
| dim 2     | .1856861          | .0344793             | 267.04  | 26.17   | 80.72            |
| dim 3     | .098886           | .0097784             | 75.73   | 7.42    | 88.14            |
| dim 4     | .0850343          | .0072308             | 56.00   | 5.49    | 93.63            |
| dim 5     | .060162           | .0036195             | 28.03   | 2.75    | 96.38            |
| dim 6     | .0527099          | .0027783             | 21.52   | 2.11    | 98.49            |
| dim 7     | .0293644          | .0008623             | 6.68    | 0.65    | 99.15            |
| dim 8     | .0223411          | .0004991             | 3.87    | 0.38    | 99.52            |
| dim 9     | .0170365          | .0002902             | 2.25    | 0.22    | 99.74            |
| dim 10    | .0167705          | .0002813             | 2.18    | 0.21    | 99.96            |
| dim 11    | .006351           | .0000403             | 0.31    | 0.03    | 99.99            |
| dim 12    | .0038275          | .0000146             | 0.11    | 0.01    | 100.00           |
| dim 13    | .0007403          | 5.48e-07             | 0.00    | 0.00    | 100.00           |
| total     |                   | .1317283             | 1020.24 | 100     |                  |

Statistics for row and column categories in symmetric normalization

| Categories  | overall |         |        | dimension_1 |        |         | dimension_2 |        |         |
|-------------|---------|---------|--------|-------------|--------|---------|-------------|--------|---------|
|             | mass    | quality | %inert | coord       | sqcorr | contrib | coord       | sqcorr | contrib |
| rows        |         |         |        |             |        |         |             |        |         |
| AB A        | 0.161   | 0.915   | 0.155  | 0.654       | 0.906  | 0.257   | 0.079       | 0.009  | 0.005   |
| AB C        | 0.141   | 0.861   | 0.081  | -0.234      | 0.193  | 0.029   | -0.521      | 0.668  | 0.206   |
| MEbase A    | 0.040   | 0.771   | 0.012  | 0.201       | 0.275  | 0.006   | -0.324      | 0.496  | 0.022   |
| MEbase B    | 0.165   | 0.828   | 0.042  | 0.300       | 0.712  | 0.055   | 0.146       | 0.116  | 0.019   |
| MAsum A     | 0.029   | 0.741   | 0.080  | -0.690      | 0.348  | 0.051   | -0.882      | 0.394  | 0.121   |
| MD A        | 0.035   | 0.770   | 0.087  | -0.478      | 0.186  | 0.030   | -1.019      | 0.584  | 0.195   |
| MESum B     | 0.046   | 0.722   | 0.027  | -0.403      | 0.562  | 0.028   | -0.259      | 0.160  | 0.017   |
| MESum D     | 0.044   | 0.883   | 0.243  | -1.445      | 0.764  | 0.341   | 0.683       | 0.118  | 0.110   |
| MESum E     | 0.034   | 0.841   | 0.088  | -0.969      | 0.741  | 0.119   | 0.428       | 0.100  | 0.033   |
| MEsw A      | 0.036   | 0.650   | 0.018  | 0.340       | 0.490  | 0.016   | -0.234      | 0.161  | 0.011   |
| MEsw B      | 0.006   | 0.748   | 0.009  | -0.280      | 0.107  | 0.002   | -0.826      | 0.641  | 0.022   |
| MEsw D      | 0.171   | 0.661   | 0.105  | -0.143      | 0.068  | 0.013   | 0.508       | 0.593  | 0.237   |
| N1 A        | 0.042   | 0.249   | 0.026  | 0.269       | 0.242  | 0.011   | 0.058       | 0.008  | 0.001   |
| N1 B        | 0.050   | 0.849   | 0.027  | 0.475       | 0.844  | 0.042   | 0.042       | 0.005  | 0.000   |
| columns     |         |         |        |             |        |         |             |        |         |
| avep        | 0.005   | 0.790   | 0.046  | -1.712      | 0.615  | 0.052   | 1.096       | 0.175  | 0.031   |
| bartvbart   | 0.029   | 0.464   | 0.090  | -0.669      | 0.291  | 0.048   | 0.620       | 0.173  | 0.060   |
| bartvestill | 0.000   | 0.303   | 0.023  | -3.587      | 0.290  | 0.012   | -0.906      | 0.013  | 0.001   |
| bartvmidn   | 0.000   | 0.074   | 0.016  | -1.213      | 0.072  | 0.002   | 0.239       | 0.002  | 0.000   |
| bell        | 0.086   | 0.993   | 0.311  | -1.022      | 0.590  | 0.336   | -1.014      | 0.403  | 0.478   |
| carsrob     | 0.002   | 0.640   | 0.045  | -2.558      | 0.611  | 0.050   | -0.661      | 0.028  | 0.005   |
| hollyww     | 0.005   | 0.569   | 0.031  | -1.341      | 0.554  | 0.031   | 0.273       | 0.016  | 0.002   |
| lelinc      | 0.001   | 0.339   | 0.019  | -0.257      | 0.005  | 0.000   | 2.409       | 0.334  | 0.024   |
| msplvnf     | 0.847   | 0.985   | 0.075  | 0.205       | 0.971  | 0.133   | 0.030       | 0.014  | 0.004   |
| nodrw       | 0.002   | 0.864   | 0.036  | -2.471      | 0.538  | 0.035   | 2.308       | 0.325  | 0.044   |
| otrvbeav    | 0.007   | 0.560   | 0.029  | -1.041      | 0.541  | 0.029   | 0.235       | 0.019  | 0.002   |
| parkvpark   | 0.014   | 0.946   | 0.219  | -2.249      | 0.637  | 0.256   | 1.883       | 0.309  | 0.259   |
| wallsvhull  | 0.002   | 0.664   | 0.037  | -1.311      | 0.208  | 0.014   | 2.333       | 0.456  | 0.064   |
| wallsvwalls | 0.001   | 0.302   | 0.024  | -0.532      | 0.016  | 0.001   | 2.734       | 0.287  | 0.026   |

Table 2.3. Abbreviations used in the correspondence analysis.

| Abbreviation | Row and column variables                     |
|--------------|--|
| AB A         | A-B Swale, analysis unit A                   |
| AB C         | A-B Swale, analysis unit C                   |
| MEbase A     | Mound E base, analysis unit A                |
| MEbase B     | Mound E base, analysis unit B                |
| MAsum A      | Mound A summit, analysis unit A              |
| MD A         | Mound D summit, analysis unit A              |
| MEsum B      | Mound E summit, analysis unit B              |
| MEsum D      | Mound E summit, analysis unit D              |
| MEsum E      | Mound E summit, analysis unit E              |
| MEsw A       | Mound E southwest slope, analysis unit A     |
| MEsw B       | Mound E southwest slope, analysis unit B     |
| MEsw D       | Mound E southwest slope, analysis unit D     |
| N1 A         | Neighborhood 1, analysis unit A              |
| N1 B         | Neighborhood 1, analysis unit B              |
| avep         | Avenue Polychrome <i>var. Avenue</i>         |
| bartvbart    | Barton Incised <i>var. Barton</i>            |
| bartvestill  | Barton Incised <i>var. Estill</i>            |
| bartvmidn    | Barton Incised <i>var. Midnight</i>          |
| bell         | Bell Plain <i>var. Bell</i>                  |
| carsrob      | Carson Red on Buff <i>var. Carson</i>        |
| hollyww      | Hollywood White <i>var. Hollywood</i>        |
| lelinc       | Leland Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>       |
| msplvnf      | Mississippi Plain <i>var. Neeley's Ferry</i> |
| nodrw        | Nodena Red and White <i>var. Nodena</i>      |
| otrvbeav     | Old Town Red <i>var. Beaverdam</i>           |
| parkvpark    | Parkin Puncatated <i>var. Parkin</i>         |
| wallsvhull   | Walls Engraved <i>var. Hull</i>              |
| wallswalls   | Walls Engraved <i>var. Walls</i>             |

Bell. Interestingly, the varieties pulled out by the second dimension are not only rare, but some are non-local as well—Leland Incised is considered a southern type, while Walls Engraved *var. Walls* is more commonly found in the Memphis subregion. Interpretations of the correspondence analysis results are discussed further in the concluding section of this chapter.

### *Attribute Analysis*

As described above, vessel attributes that crosscut types and varieties may have much potential for making finer-grained chronological distinctions among ceramic components that

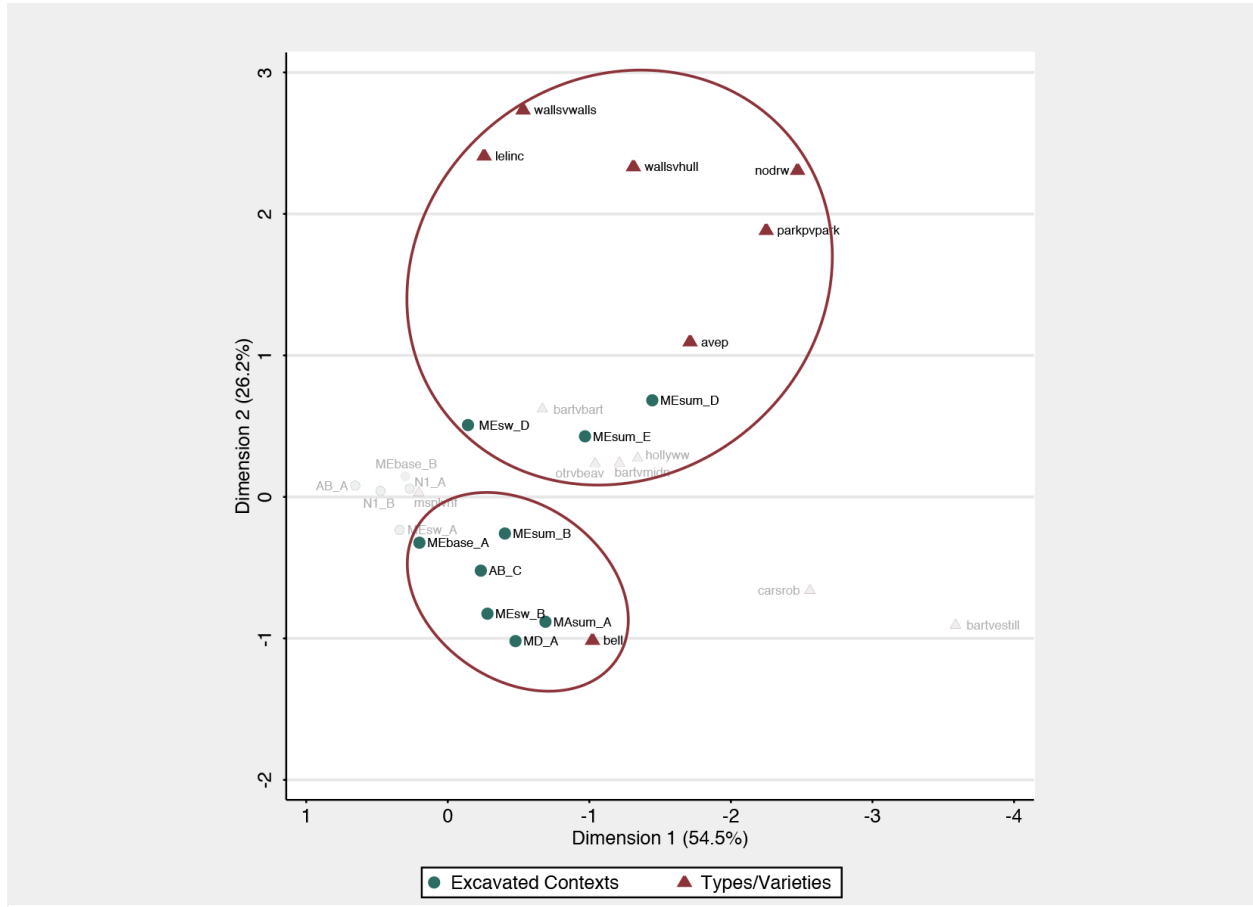


Figure 2.11. Correspondence Analysis biplot highlighting two distinct clusters along the second dimension. Dimension two separates contexts based on their frequencies of plain (lower cluster) versus decorated (upper cluster) fine wares. A key to abbreviations used here can be found in Table 2.3.

otherwise look quite similar. To this end, I recorded rim and lip attributes related to form, finish, and decorative embellishment. I also recorded presence and type of appendages such as nodes, lugs, and handles as well as surface finishing in the form of burnishing.

Although sometimes used interchangeably, I follow Phillips et al. (1951) and others in distinguishing between rim and lip portions in my analysis and the two were recorded separately. By rim form, I refer to the form of the uppermost portion of the vessel (above the neck and

shoulder), including the lip and immediately adjacent regions. Lip treatment refers exclusively to the finishing of the vessel opening or orifice. There were 1339 rim sherds in the sample where rim form and/or lip treatment could be determined, all of which are included in the following classification (Table 2.4). Descriptions of rim form and lip treatments can be found in Appendix 2.

Simple rims are by far the most common rim form, occurring on all vessel types in the assemblage, including fine and coarse ware jars, bowls, and bottles. As a group, simple rims account for over 97% of rims in the sample. When further subdivided by lip treatment, simple rounded rims were the most common (n = 674) followed by simple flattened (n = 476). Simple intermediate rims, falling somewhere in between rounded and flattened, were recorded for 150 vessels.

Table 2.4. Rim form and lip treatment for ceramic vessels from Parchman Place (22CO511).

| <b>Rim/Lip</b>           | <b>Surface (ct)</b> | <b>Excavated (ct)</b> | <b>Total (ct)</b> | <b>% of total rim assemblage</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Simple (97.09%)</b>   |                     |                       |                   |                                  |
| Rounded                  | 316                 | 358                   | 674               | 50.34%                           |
| Flattened                | 189                 | 287                   | 476               | 35.55%                           |
| Intermediate             | 100                 | 50                    | 150               | 11.20%                           |
| <b>Folded (1.12%)</b>    |                     |                       |                   |                                  |
| Rounded                  | 3                   | 4                     | 7                 | 0.52%                            |
| Flattened                | –                   | 6                     | 6                 | 0.45%                            |
| Intermediate             | –                   | 2                     | 2                 | 0.15%                            |
| <b>Thinned (0.90%)</b>   |                     |                       |                   |                                  |
| Rounded                  | 2                   | 7                     | 9                 | 0.67%                            |
| Flattened                | 2                   | –                     | 2                 | 0.15%                            |
| Intermediate             | –                   | 1                     | 1                 | 0.07%                            |
| <b>Thickened (0.52%)</b> |                     |                       |                   |                                  |
| Rounded                  | 3                   | 3                     | 6                 | 0.45%                            |
| Flattened                | 1                   | –                     | 1                 | 0.07%                            |
| <b>Beveled (0.30%)</b>   | –                   | 4                     | 4                 | 0.30%                            |
| <b>Tiered (0.07%)</b>    | –                   | 1                     | 1                 | 0.07%                            |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>616</b>          | <b>723</b>            | <b>1339</b>       | <b>100.00%</b>                   |

The remaining 3% of rim forms are very rare. Folded rims account for 1.12% of the sample, occurring on 15 vessels, including jars and bowls. Most folded rims were then rounded ( $n = 7$ ) or flattened ( $n = 6$ ), though two were intermediate. Thinned, thickened, beveled, and tiered rims each make up less than 1% of the sample. Twelve rims in the sample were thinned (0.90%). Of these, nine were rounded, two were flattened, and one was intermediate. Thinned rims occur primarily on coarse ware jars, bowls, and bottles, though one fine ware jar had a thinned rim. Seven rims (0.52%) in the sample were thickened, a rim form that is confined to bowls of either coarse or fine ware. Of the seven, six rims were rounded and one was flattened. Four vessels (0.30%) had beveled rims. The beveled form, sometimes called the “Memphis Rim Mode” (House 1993:27) is primarily associated with jars at Parchman. Finally, one vessel (a coarse ware jar) has an unusual rim form made by pinching up the clay of the rim into a peak, then flattening a portion of it so that the rim appears to be “tiered.”

Decorative embellishments on the rim or lip were recorded separately from rim finishes and consist of decorative motifs that were added to the lip after it was finished by rounding, flattening, etc. Generally speaking, they consist of various types of scalloping, incision, notching, and punctation. Other decorative embellishments occur on or in the vessel body and include burnishing, addition of nodes, and in one case, a cut-away design on the interior of a bowl that is reminiscent of bas-relief (Table 2.5). Eighty-seven vessels in the assemblage (6.24% of 1394 total rim and body sherds for which vessel shape could be determined) had some form of embellishment not encompassed by the type and variety classification.

Among the 87 vessels included in the attribute sample, scalloping was the most common rim treatment (39.08%). I have divided scalloped rims into two types: gently undulating rounded rims ( $n = 25$ ) and rims with large rounded notches removed ( $n = 9$ ). Both of these are a fairly

Table 2.5. Decorative embellishment for ceramic vessels from Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Decorative Embellishment                               | Surface (ct) | Excavated (ct) | Total (ct) | % of total attribute assemblage |
|--|--------------|----------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Scalloped (39.08%)</b>                              |              |                |            |                                 |
| gently undulating rounded rim                          | 7            | 18             | 25         | 28.74%                          |
| large rounded notches                                  | 2            | 7              | 9          | 10.34%                          |
| <b>Incised (20.69%)</b>                                |              |                |            |                                 |
| vertical/perpendicular incisions exterior lip          | 2            | 2              | 4          | 4.60%                           |
| vertical/perpendicular incisions interior lip          | –            | 3              | 3          | 3.45%                           |
| vertical/perpendicular incisions top of lip            | 1            | 1              | 2          | 2.30%                           |
| horizontal/parallel incision exterior lip              | 1            | –              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| horizontal/parallel incision interior lip              | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| horizontal/parallel incision interior and exterior lip | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| horizontal/parallel incision top of lip                | 2            | 1              | 3          | 3.45%                           |
| diagonal incisions top of lip                          | 1            | 2              | 3          | 3.45%                           |
| <b>Notched (12.64%)</b>                                |              |                |            |                                 |
| notched exterior lip                                   | 1            | 1              | 2          | 2.30%                           |
| notched exterior lip (short, wide)                     | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| notched interior lip                                   | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| notched top of lip                                     | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| notched interior to exterior lip                       | 1            | 1              | 2          | 2.30%                           |
| triangular notches interior to exterior                | –            | 4              | 4          | 4.60%                           |
| <b>Punctated (4.60%)</b>                               |              |                |            |                                 |
| circular punctations top of lip                        | 2            | –              | 2          | 2.30%                           |
| thumbnail punctations below exterior lip               | 1            | –              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| thumbnail punctations exterior lip                     | 1            | –              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| <b>Other (22.99%)</b>                                  |              |                |            |                                 |
| burnished  | –            | 13             | 13         | 14.94%                          |
| node   | 1            | 5              | 6          | 6.90%                           |
| stepped incision/etching on interior of bowl           | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.15%                           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>23</b>    | <b>64</b>      | <b>87</b>  | <b>100.00%</b>                  |

common treatment for serving bowls at Parchman, occurring on fine and coarse ware varieties of flaring rim and wide shallow bowls (Figure 2.12).

Following scalloping, fine line incision is the next most common form of decorative attribute, occurring on 20.69% of the attribute sample (Figure 2.13). I have distinguished three main types of incision: (1) continuous line incision that is horizontal or parallel to the vessel rim, (2) multiple vertical incisions that are perpendicular to the vessel rim, and (3) multiple diagonal incisions occurring on the top of the vessel lip. Horizontal or parallel incision (n = 6) is





Figure 2.12. Scalloped rims, including gently undulating rounded rims (a., b., c., f.) and rims with large rounded notches removed (d., e.) from Parchman Place (22CO511)



Figure 2.13. Rim embellishments, including horizontal incision on the exterior (a., b.) and interior (a.) rim; vertical incisions on the interior (c.), exterior (d.), and top of lip (f.); notching on the interior lip (g.) and all the way through the lip (i., j., k.); and punctations below the rim (h.) from Parchman Place (22CO511).

associated with bowl forms and can occur on the top of the lip, on the exterior of the vessel just below the lip, or on the interior of the vessel just below the lip. One example has horizontal incision on both the interior and exterior vessel rim. Likewise, vertical or perpendicular incision ( $n = 9$ ) can occur on the top of the lip, on the vessel exterior, and on the vessel interior. This treatment is primarily associated with bowls, though one coarse ware jar has exterior vertical incision. Diagonal incision ( $n = 3$ ) can occur on bowls and jars and is always found on the top of the lip.

Notching (Figure 2.13) occurs on 12.64% of the attribute sample and is found on the exterior vessel lip ( $n = 3$ ), on the interior vessel lip ( $n = 1$ ), and on the top of the lip ( $n = 1$ ). In these placements, the notching is typically small, shallow, and rectangular in shape. Two additional types of notching differ in that they were achieved by cutting away or otherwise completely removing clay from the vessel wall, resulting in a crenellated effect. These notches extend from the interior to the exterior of the vessel walls and can be rectangular ( $n = 2$ ) or triangular ( $n = 4$ ) in shape. In two examples, triangular notches were ground out of the vessel wall subsequent to firing. Notching is most commonly found on bowl forms, but at least one coarse ware jar has triangular notches that were ground out after the vessel was fired.

Four vessels (4.6% of the attribute sample) exhibit punctations (Figure 2.13), including circular punctations on the top of the lip ( $n = 2$ ) and thumbnail punctations on or below the exterior lip ( $n = 2$ ). Both vessels with circular lip punctations were bowls, while one jar had thumbnail punctations 2 cm below the exterior lip. The other vessel is of indeterminate shape. Decorative attributes that are not associated with vessel rims include the addition of nodes, overall burnishing, and decorative embellishment on the vessel interior. Nodes are surprisingly uncommon, occurring six times in the sample. In two cases, nodes were located on the shoulders

of jars. Two other jars had nodes on their handles. Though fine ware vessels are common at Parchman, burnishing is not a common surface treatment, occurring on 13 vessels for which shape could be determined (14.94% of 87 vessels included in the attribute sample). Though rare, burnishing is found on jars, bowls, and bottles of various types. Finally, one fine ware flaring rim bowl has an unusual interior decoration, consisting of a stepped geometric design that was made by cutting away clay to leave behind a raised design in the manner of bas-relief (Figure 2.14). Since neither the design, the technique used to make it, nor the paste and temper combination is typical for Parchman, I suspect that this bowl is non-local, though I can find nothing like it in the literature of the Lower Mississippi Valley and adjacent regions.



Figure 2.14. Flaring rim bowl with stepped interior design from Parchman Place (22CO511).

Handles of various types are fairly rare in the sample, but are most often associated with jars, 72 of which had some type of handle appended. Four bowls also had handles, as well as 21 vessels of indeterminate shape for a total of 97 handles in the sample. Handles, including lugs as well as those making up the loopform handle series (Smith 1969) are tabulated in Table 2.6 (see illustrations in Figure 2.15). Handles in the loopform series include loop, intermediate loop-strap, strap, tube or wide strap, and zoomorphic forms (see Appendix 2 for handle descriptions).

Though referred to here as handles, it is unclear whether lugs were always functional or sometimes merely decorative. If they functioned as handles, they could have been used to pick up and transport vessels (e.g. in and out of cooking fires), as appendages to which vessel covers

Table 2.6. Handles associated with ceramic vessels from Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Handles                        | Surface (ct) | Excavated (ct) | Total (ct) | % of total rim assemblage |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Lug (71.13%)</b>            |              |                |            |                           |
| oval lug                       | 4            | 20             | 24         | 24.74%                    |
| oval lug below lip             | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.03%                     |
| downturning oval lug           | –            | 5              | 5          | 5.15%                     |
| fat lug                        | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.03%                     |
| elongated oval lug             | –            | 6              | 6          | 6.19%                     |
| downturning elongated oval lug | –            | 2              | 2          | 2.06%                     |
| triangular lug                 | –            | 2              | 2          | 2.06%                     |
| indeterminate lug              | 12           | 15             | 27         | 27.84%                    |
| indeterminate lug below rim    | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.03%                     |
| <b>Loop Series (16.49%)</b>    |              |                |            |                           |
| loop                           | 1            | 1              | 2          | 2.06%                     |
| intermediate loop/strap        | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.03%                     |
| strap                          | 1            | 8              | 9          | 9.28%                     |
| tube                           | –            | 3              | 3          | 3.09%                     |
| zoomorphic                     | –            | 1              | 1          | 1.03%                     |
| <b>Unspecified (12.37%)</b>    |              |                |            |                           |
| broken or missing              | 1            | 7              | 8          | 8.25%                     |
| not recorded                   | 2            | 2              | 4          | 4.12%                     |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>21</b>    | <b>76</b>      | <b>97</b>  | <b>100.00%</b>            |



Figure 2.15. Handles from Parchman Place (22CO511), including oval lug (a.); triangular lug (b.); oval lug below lip (c.); loop with nodes (d.); intermediate loop-strap (e.); strap (f.); tube or wide strap (g.); strap with nodes and “legs” (h.); and zoomorphic (i.).

could have been lashed, or even to suspend vessels as over a cooking fire (see Chapter 3). Lug handles as a group make up 71.13% of the handle sample. Thirty examples of oval lug handles exist in the sample, the most common of the lug forms. Twenty-six of these were appended to jars, two to bowls, and two to vessels of indeterminate shape. One of the lugs was attached about two centimeters below the rim of the jar; all others formed part of the vessel rim. Five oval lugs associated with jars were downturning rather than flat. One jar lug was “fat.” Eight elongated oval lugs were recorded in the sample, seven of which were attached to jars, the other to a vessel of indeterminate shape. Two of the elongated jar lugs were downturning. Two lug handles were roughly triangular in shape. One such lug was attached to a bowl, while the other was attached to

a vessel of indeterminate shape. Finally, twenty-eight additional lug handles were identified as indeterminate because they were broken or otherwise incomplete (25 jars, 1 bowl, 2 indeterminate vessels). One of the missing/broken lugs was attached about two centimeters below the rim, while all others were adjacent to the rim.

Loopform series handles make up 16.49% of the handles recorded in the sample. True loop handles are rare in the Parchman sample, occurring just twice. Both examples are associated with jars. One of these has two nodes at its base; it is attached to a very small jar of indeterminate ware. One handle in the sample appears to be intermediate between that of a loop and a strap handle. It is attached to a small jar of indeterminate ware. Strap handles are the most common of the loop form series handles, occurring nine times. In four instances, strap handles were attached to coarse ware jars; the other five were also likely associated with jars though shape could not be determined from the portion of the vessel present. One strap handle associated with a small coarse ware jar was attached at the shoulder of the vessel by two “legs” and has one node visible on the upper portion, though there were probably originally two. Three examples of tube handles were identified in the Parchman assemblage, one on a medium sized coarse ware jar, the other two on vessels of indeterminate shape. One of the latter was embellished with vertical incisions at the base of the handle. One complete zoomorphic handle was found during excavations at Parchman. The handle was formed into the shape of a four-legged animal with a long tail, perhaps a feline or lizard form. Unfortunately, very little of the vessel to which it was attached was recovered. However, it appears to have been a coarse ware jar of indeterminate size. Finally, 12.37% of the handle sample ( $n = 12$ ) includes handles that were broken, missing, or for which additional information was not recorded. Four of the vessels with broken, missing, or unspecified handle forms were jars.

The only attributes that occurred with any frequency in the vessel assemblage were simple rounded/simple flattened rims (all vessel types), gently undulating rounded rims (bowls), rims with large rounded notches removed (bowls), and various types of lug handles (mostly jars). Because of the very rare occurrence of most other attributes, multivariate statistical methods were unsuccessful at detecting meaningful patterned differences in attribute frequencies among excavated contexts. However, considering presence/absence in excavated contexts suggests that chronological differences in attribute frequencies may exist that are obscured by small sample sizes. These are discussed in the following section.

### **Discussion and Comparison**

To determine whether refinements in the ceramic chronology of Parchman are justified based on the current analysis, I compare the results of previous surface collections to my own surface collections from 2010-11. Then, I consider the entire 2002-2011 sample of excavated and surface collected ceramics in order to determine what refinements, if any, can be made to previous characterizations of the Parchman phase.

Previous surface collections from Parchman made by the Lower Mississippi Survey (Phillips et al. 1951; Steponaitis et al. 2002), Ian Brown (1978), and the Mississippi Archaeological Survey (Starr 1984) have formed our understanding of chronology at the site and within the immediate region. Type counts from these three collections are reported by Starr (1984). All three previous surface collections from Parchman as well as my own are overwhelmingly dominated by Mississippi Plain sherds but the samples differ sometimes significantly in proportions (Figure 2.16). Phillips found that the LMS collections consisted of



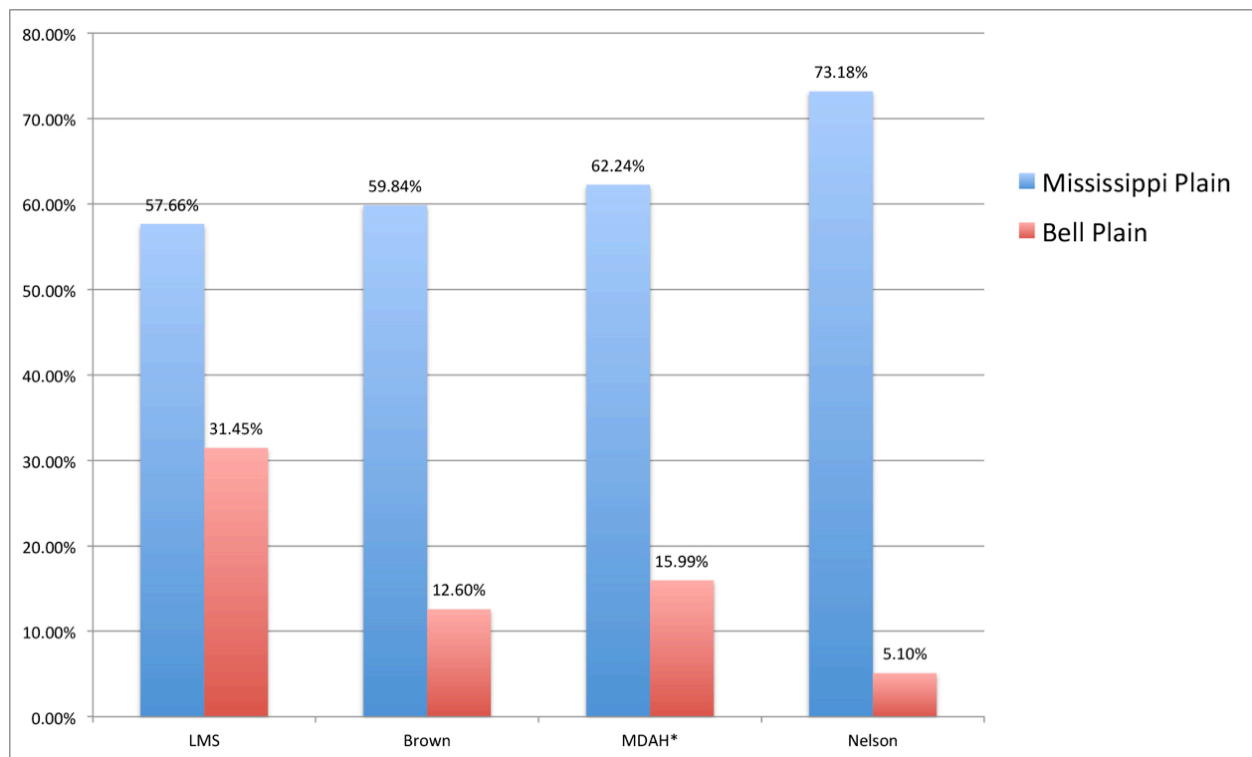


Figure 2.16. Histogram of Mississippi Plain and Bell Plain ceramics from four surface collections: (1) Lower Mississippi Survey (LMS), 1940; (2) Ian Brown, 1977; Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), 1980s; and (4) Erin Nelson and students, 2010-11 (shown as percentages of the respective assemblages).

\*MDAH counts for Bell Plain include sherds types as Bell Plain and Addis Plain.

57.66% Mississippi Plain and 31.45% Bell Plain, a ratio of roughly 2:1 (even though in his description of the Parchman phase he characterizes the proportions as “approximately even” based on rim sherds). Surveys conducted by Brown and members of MDAH found approximately the same proportion of Mississippi Plain (59.84% and 62.24% of their respective samples) but differed from Phillips in the proportion of Bell Plain (12.6% and 15.99% respectively). My findings from controlled surface collections differ somewhat from each of the previous surveys in that I found 73.18% Mississippi Plain and 5.10% Bell Plain, an approximate ratio of 14:1! This is a serious discrepancy, but one that can probably be explained by differing survey strategies as well as site formation processes.



The three surface collections conducted prior to my work in 2010 and 2011 were opportunistic surveys. That is, surveyors picked the most likely spots on the site for collection based on the quantity and in some cases, the quality, of ceramics located there. This is justifiable because larger sample sizes as well as diagnostic types are more useful for constructing chronologies than are smaller samples and plain wares. This bias is most pronounced for the earliest survey, conducted by members of the LMS in 1940 (Steponaitis et al. 2002). My survey, on the other hand, used timed intervals and collection squares of uniform size to collect samples from the entire site, resulting in a more complete and accurate representation of the distribution of ceramic types on the surface. My survey, however, suffers from a serious disadvantage in that modern agricultural practices (namely mechanized plowing) and differential breakage rates of coarse vs. fine earthenware vessels likely result in an over-representation of Mississippi Plain relative to Bell Plain sherds compared to earlier surveys. That my sample should differ most from the LMS sample, while the other two are intermediate, is perhaps not surprising.

Other discrepancies also exist among the four samples (Figure 2.17). Phillips, for instance, finds much lower proportions of the painted types Old Town Red and Nodena Red and White in the LMS collection than do other researchers. For such a small sample (127 sherds), Brown's survey resulted in a relatively high diversity of types, including several that were not present in the LMS or MDAH samples, including Pouncey Pinched, Grace Brushed, Mound Place Incised, and Anna Incised. Brown also has higher proportions of Barton varieties and Walls *var. Hull*, though this is potentially a result of sample bias. The only other surprise is the relative lack of Parkin Punctated in any of the early samples; only one specimen was found in all three early surveys, as compared to my sample, where it is well represented (but see discussion in Appendix 1 regarding difficulties in sorting Parkin sherds that lack rim portions). I also have

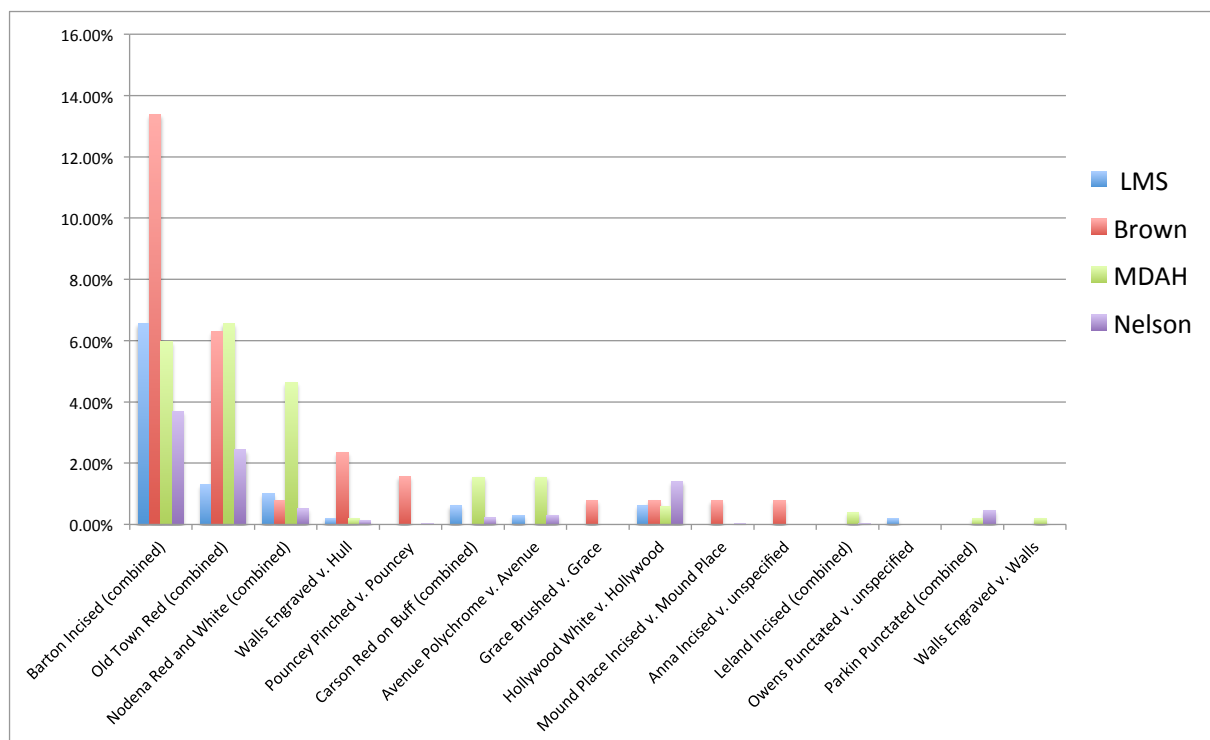


Figure 2.17. Histogram of decorated ceramics from four surface collections: (1) Lower Mississippi Survey, 1940; (2) Ian Brown, 1977; (3) Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1980s; and (4) Erin Nelson and students, 2010-11 (shown as percentages of the respective assemblages).

slightly less Barton Incised in my surface collection than others (just over 3% compared with 6-13%). Finally, I collected types that were not encountered by any of the previous surveys, including Winterville Incised and Mulberry Creek Cordmarked, which occurred in moderate numbers in my sample, and Larto Red and Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake*, which were minority types.

Given differences in collection strategies and sorting conventions, as well as the effects of site formation processes, the ceramic assemblage recovered from mound excavations and surface collections at Parchman Place accords fairly well with Phillips's, Brown's, and Starr's descriptions of Parchman phase ceramics, with exceptions as noted above. It accords less well, however, with Brain's Yazoo 8 subset, which should include Barton Incised *vars. Davion* and

*Portland*, Owens Punctated *var. Redwood*, and Winterville Incised *var. Tunica*. Barton Incised *var. Davion*, as I understand, is simply an alternative name for Barton Incised *var. Barton*, which I have found to be the most common of decorated types in the mound assemblage. Excepting this, however, the other varieties listed by Brain as present in Parchman assemblages are all conspicuously absent from this collection. Brain's Yazoo 8 subset, however, is defined on the basis of collections from Carson, Stokes Bayou, and Myer, all "Parchman phase" sites close to Parchman itself. The discrepancies between assemblages, therefore, might be due to cultural or possibly chronological differences among the sites. Incidentally, Brown (2008:382) has also found that "the markers that Brain put forth really do not seem to be very common in the region."

While the above comparison suggests some differences among surface collected ceramics, comparing 2010-2011 surface collections to the assemblage recovered from excavated contexts also suggests potential for chronological refinement (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3 and Table 2.1). Overall, there is a higher proportion of Mississippi Plain (81.4%) in the excavated sample than in surface collections (73.2%). There is a slightly higher proportion of Bell Plain (7.65%) in the excavated sample than in the surface collection (5.10%), and ratios of Mississippi Plain to Bell Plain (11:1 in excavations vs. 14:1 in surface collections) differ as well. As for decorated types (see Figure 2.3), there is more Parkin in excavated contexts than in surface collections, and ratios of Barton to Parkin differ considerably (4:1 among the excavated assemblage and 9:1 in surface collections). There is less Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam*, Hollywood White, and to a lesser extent Nodena Red and White and Old Town Red varieties in excavated contexts versus surface contexts. However, Avenue Polychrome figures more in excavated contexts. Everything else is more or less equal. On the whole, then, plain ware varieties seem to be overrepresented in

excavated contexts, while the opposite is true for painted wares (excepting Avenue).

Comparing frequencies of attributes present in the surface collection versus excavated contexts (Tables 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6) is more difficult due to small sample sizes, but it does appear that handles of all types are more commonly found in excavated contexts, as are certain rim forms, including thinned, folded, and beveled rims. Rim notching is more commonly found on vessels from excavated contexts, while rim punctation is only found in the surface collected sample.

I suspect these differences can be attributed to changes in the ceramic assemblage over time. Because the surface collection represents artifacts that were plowed up from relatively shallow depths, this assemblage represents a more isolated component than that of the excavated sample, which includes contexts spanning the history of Parchman's occupation.

The results of the correspondence analysis (Figures 2.10 and 2.11) support this interpretation. On the first dimension, excavated contexts that plot in a cluster with Mississippi Plain all returned 14<sup>th</sup> century dates (see Table 1.2 for analysis units and associated C14 dates). The contexts that plot closer to the right side of the graph along with painted and fine wares have returned 15<sup>th</sup> century dates. One context (MEsum\_B) also returned a 15<sup>th</sup> century date, but as it falls stratigraphically between the earlier and later contexts, its intermediate position in the biplot is unsurprising. Dimension 2 may also show this pattern to a lesser extent as decorated fine wares correspond well with 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts, while contexts corresponding well with Bell are chronologically mixed. (The possibility that this pattern can be explained by contexts of use instead of or in addition to change over time is further explored in Chapter 3).

In some ways, this result is not surprising. We know from Phillips (1970), for instance, that painted and finely decorated types are more common among Late Mississippi period

assemblages than earlier ones. Analysis of vessel attributes not captured by the type-variety classification points to a similar trend in the proliferation of decorative elements over time (discussed below). However, the fact that two distinct ceramic assemblages at Parchman can be separated using multivariate statistics is significant in terms of our ability to refine chronology based on ceramic phases in the northern Yazoo. It also suggests that Brain may have been (partially) correct in identifying two phase components at the site. I will return to this argument below.

Considering presence/absence of ceramic types without regard to the correspondence analysis, types and varieties that occur exclusively in 14<sup>th</sup> century contexts are L'Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified* and Salomon Brushed (Table 2.7). They are both minority types in the sample. There are also a few types that are associated with both the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries but that do not occur in the earliest 14<sup>th</sup> century contexts: Avenue Polychrome *var. Avenue*, Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam*, and Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin*. Additionally, Nodena Red and

Table 2.7. Types and varieties associated with excavated ceramics from 14th and 15th century contexts at Parchman Place (22CO511).

| 14th Century                                | 14th/15th Century                                 | 15th Century                          |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| L'Eau Noire Incised <i>var. L'Eau Noire</i> | Avenue Polychrome <i>var. Avenue</i>              | Barton Incised <i>var. Estill</i>     |
| Salomon Brushed <i>var. Salomon</i>         | Barton Incised <i>var. Barton</i>                 | Barton Incised <i>var. Midnight</i>   |
|   | Baytown Plain <i>var. Baytown</i>                 | Barton Incised <i>var. Togo</i>       |
|   | Bell Plain <i>var. Bell</i>                       | Carson Red on Buff <i>var. Carson</i> |
|   | Hollywood White <i>var. Hollywood</i>             | Grace Brushed <i>var. Grace</i>       |
|   | Larto Red <i>var. Larto</i>                       | Pouncey Pinched <i>var. Pouncey</i>   |
|   | Leland Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>            | Rhodes Incised <i>var. Horn Lake</i>  |
|   | Mississippi Plain <i>var. Neeley's Ferry</i>      | Walls Engraved <i>var. Walls</i>      |
|   | Mulberry Creek Cordmarked <i>var. unspecified</i> |                                       |
|   | Nodena Red and White <i>var. Nodena</i>           |                                       |
|   | Old Town Red <i>var. Beaverdam</i>                |                                       |
|   | Old Town Red <i>var. Old Town</i>                 |                                       |
|   | Parkin Punctated <i>var. Parkin</i>               |                                       |
|   | Walls Engraved <i>var. Hull</i>                   |                                       |
|   | Winterville Incised <i>var. Winterville</i>       |                                       |

White *var. Nodena* and Walls Engraved *var. Hull* do occur in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in small numbers but are more prevalent in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. I am fairly surprised to see Avenue and Walls Engraved *var. Hull* in early contexts. There is only one example of Walls *var. Hull* in a 14<sup>th</sup> century context, so I would be willing to bet on its being intrusive (or perhaps misclassified). However, there is enough of an Avenue presence in the 14<sup>th</sup> century contexts to make me think that it is actually there, if only a minority presence.

Types that appear throughout both periods include: Barton Incised *var. Barton*, Baytown Plain *var. Baytown*, Bell Plain *var. Bell*, Hollywood White *var. Hollywood*, Larto Red *var. Larto* (minority type), Leland Incised *var. unspecified* (minority type), Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*, Mulberry Creek Cordmarked, Old Town Red *var. Old Town*, and Winterville Incised *var. Winterville*. It is also a bit of a surprise to see so many clay-tempered “Baytown” varieties in the 15<sup>th</sup> century—i.e. Baytown Plain, Larto Red, and Mulberry Creek Cordmarked—but it is possible that these clay-tempered varieties may have been manufactured for longer than previously thought. It is also possible that they were redeposited from earlier contexts on the site.

Types that I found to be exclusively present in 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts include: Barton Incised *vars. Estill, Midnight, and Togo* (all minority types); Carson Red on Buff *var. Carson*, Grace Brushed *var. Grace* (minority type), Pouncey Pinched *var. Pouncey* (minority type), Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake* (minority type), and Walls Engraved *var. Walls*.

There are also changes in the presence and frequency of vessel attributes over time. Table 2.8 lists presence/absence data for attributes associated exclusively with 14<sup>th</sup> century contexts and with 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts, as well as those associated with both 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts. The 14<sup>th</sup> century sample includes 47 bowls, 87 jars, and 11 bottles from dated contexts (vessel shape is discussed further in Chapter 3). Bowls are more variable in attribute presence than are

Table 2.8. Attributes associated with excavated ceramics from 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Parchman Place (22CO511).

| 14th Century                             | 14th/15th Century                    | 15th Century   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| triangular incisions on top of lip (jar) | simple rim (jar, bowl, bottle)       | beveled rim (jar)  |
| lug below lip (jar)                      | oval lug (jar)                       | folded rim (jar)   |
| folded rim (bowl)                        | elongated oval lug (jar)             | peaked rim (jar)   |
| notched exterior lip (bowl)              | strap handle (jar)                   | thinned rim (jar)  |
| notched interior lip (bowl)              | burnishing (jar, bottle)             | incision perpendicular to rim on exterior lip (jar)                  |
| triangular lug (bowl)                    | thickened rim (bowl)                 | downturning oval lug (jar)   |
|  | thinned rim (bowl)                   | downturning elongated oval lug (jar)                                 |
|  | gently ungulating rounded rim (bowl) | fat lug (jar)  |
|  | large rounded notches (bowl)         | loop handle (jar)  |
|  |                                      | intermediate loop/strap handle (jar)                                 |
|  |                                      | tube handle (jar)  |
|  |                                      | zoomorphic handle (jar)  |
|  |                                      | incision parallel to rim on interior, exterior, or top of lip (bowl) |
|  |                                      | incision perpendicular to rim on interior or exterior lip (bowl)     |
|  |                                      | oval lug (bowl)  |
|  |                                      | stepped bas relief design on interior of body (bowl)                 |
|  |                                      | burnishing (bowl)  |

jars. No attributes were recorded for bottles. Bowl attributes with 14<sup>th</sup> century associations include folded rims, notched interior and exterior lips, and triangular lugs. Jar attributes include triangular notching of the lip and lugs located below rather than adjacent to the lip.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century sample includes 56 bowls, 171 jars, and 29 bottles from dated contexts. Bowl rim attributes associated exclusively with 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Parchman include continuous linear incision parallel to the rim on the interior, exterior, and/or top of the lip; and linear incision perpendicular to the rim on the interior or exterior lip. One bowl has a stepped geometric design on its interior body portion that was made by cutting away clay to leave a raised design behind in the manner of bas-relief. Oval lugs and burnishing also appear on 15<sup>th</sup> century bowls.

Generally speaking, design attributes associated with jars from the 15<sup>th</sup> century are both more abundant and more diverse than earlier ones, though sample bias could contribute to this discrepancy, as there are more than double the number of jars associated with 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts than 14<sup>th</sup> century ones. Nonetheless, 15<sup>th</sup> century jars are associated with more diversity in rim treatment, including beveled, thinned, folded, and peaked rims. Linear incision

perpendicular to the rim on the exterior lip also occurs on 15<sup>th</sup> century jars (See also Mainfort 2003 on exterior notching). Jars from the later contexts are also associated with a variety of handle appendages not present in the earlier contexts. These include downturning lugs (oval and elongated oval), one example of a fat lug (Belmont's "Hushpuckena" lug?), loop handles, intermediate loop/strap handles, tube or wide strap handles, and zoomorphic handles.

A number of attributes are present throughout both periods. These include simple rounded or flattened rims on bowls, jars, and bottles—far and away the most common rim type for both periods. Bowls throughout both periods are also associated with both thickened and thinned rims, as well as gently undulating rounded rims and rims with large rounded notches. Both of these latter attributes result in a similar scalloped effect and are a fairly common rim treatment on flaring rim and wide shallow bowls. For jars, both oval and elongated oval lugs occur in both periods. Strap handles are also present in both 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts, though they are more common in the 15<sup>th</sup> century ones. Finally, burnishing is associated with jars and bottles in both periods.

As with decorated types and varieties, there is greater variety in attributes associated with the later period. This seems particularly true of rim types associated with jars, with beveled, folded, peaked, and thinned jar rims present only in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Elaboration of bowl rims seems to happen earlier: folded rims on bowls are associated exclusively with the 14<sup>th</sup> century, while thinned and thickened bowl rims are associated with both periods. In terms of lip decoration, notching and triangular incision associated with the 14<sup>th</sup> century seem to give way to fine linear incision later on. Scalloped bowl rims are present throughout Parchman's occupation.

Lugs also show some differences over time in terms of shape and placement. While oval and elongated oval lugs occur throughout, the only examples of triangular lugs and lugs attached



below the lip occur in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Later, all examples of lugs are attached adjacent to the rim. Downturning and “fat” lugs are associated only with 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts.

The results of the handle analysis (excluding lugs) do not seem to conform to expectations of changes in handle shape over time that are prevalent elsewhere in the region. The entire series of loopform handles (loop, intermediate, strap, tube, zoomorphic) is associated with 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Parchman. The only handle also occurring in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (though with less frequency than in the 15<sup>th</sup>) is the strap handle, thought by others to occur later in Mississippian assemblages than loop and intermediate handles.

All of this indicates that we are now in a position to subdivide the Parchman phase in a way that may prove more useful for making chronological assessments at a finer scale at the Parchman site and within the region, a necessary first step for understanding the social relationships among people within and among communities. I propose here that we consider the following subdivisions, with trait lists shown in Tables 2.9 and 2.10.

### *Parchman I*

Parchman I roughly corresponds to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the plain ware “supertypes” Mississippi Plain, Bell Plain, and Baytown Plain, Parchman I also contains Barton Incised *var. Barton* and its more southerly counterpart, Winterville Incised *var. Winterville*. Clay-tempered types are well represented—in addition to Baytown, these include Larto Red, Mulberry Creek Cordmarked, and Salomon Brushed *var. Salomon*. Less common incised varieties include L’Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified* and Leland Incised *var. unspecified*, both shell-tempered, though L’Eau Noire is more typically found on clay-tempered paste. Painted wares in addition to Larto include Hollywood White *var. Hollywood* and Old Town Red *var. Old*

Table 2.9. Ceramic types, varieties, and attributes present in proposed Parchman I sub-phase. Bold type indicates exclusive presence in sub-phase.

| <b>Parchman I (14th century)</b>                   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Types and varieties:</b>                        | <b>Attributes:</b>                              |
| Barton Incised <i>var. Barton</i>                  | simple rim (jar, bowl, bottle)                  |
| Baytown Plain <i>var. Baytown</i>                  | oval lug (jar)                                  |
| Bell Plain <i>var. Bell</i>                        | elongated oval lug (jar)                        |
| Hollywood White <i>var. Hollywood</i>              | strap handle (jar)                              |
| <b>L'Eau Noire Incised <i>var. unspecified</i></b> | <b>triangular incisions on top of lip (jar)</b> |
| Larto Red <i>var. Larto</i>                        | <b>lug below lip (jar)</b>                      |
| Leland Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>             | burnishing (jar, bottle)                        |
| Mississippi Plain <i>var. Neeley's Ferry</i>       | thickened rim (bowl)                            |
| Mulberry Creek Cordmarked <i>var. unspecified</i>  | thinned rim (bowl)                              |
| Old Town Red <i>var. Old Town</i>                  | gently undulating rounded rim (bowl)            |
| <b>Salomon Brushed <i>var. Salomon</i></b>         | large rounded notches (bowl)                    |
| Winterville Incised <i>var. Winterville</i>        | <b>folded rim (bowl)</b>                        |
|  | <b>notched exterior lip (bowl)</b>              |
|  | <b>notched interior lip (bowl)</b>              |
|  | <b>triangular lug (bowl)</b>                    |

*Town*, both shell tempered. In terms of attributes, jars and bottles have simple flattened or simple rounded rims. Bowl rims are more variable, including simple flattened, simple rounded, thickened, thinned, and folded forms. Additional rim embellishment on jars is very uncommon, but triangular incision on the top of the lip has been observed. Bowls not uncommonly have scalloped rims, either of the gently undulating rounded variety or with scallops achieved by the removal of large rounded notches. Bowls can also have notching on the interior or exterior lip. Burnishing is uncommon, occasionally occurring on jars and bottles but not bowls. Handles are also uncommon, but include oval and elongated oval lugs attached at or below the lip of jars, and triangular lugs on bowls. Strap handles are sometimes found on jars. Types, varieties, and attributes that are found *exclusively* in Parchman I include L'Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified*, Salomon Brushed *var. Salomon*, folded bowl rims, triangular incisions on jar lips, interior and exterior notched bowl lips, lugs attached below the rim, and triangular bowl lugs.

Table 2.10. Ceramic types, varieties, and attributes present in proposed Parchman II sub-phase. Bold type indicates exclusive presence in sub-phase.

| <b>Parchman II (15th century)</b>                 |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Types and Varieties:</b>                       | <b>Attributes:</b>  |
| Avenue Polychrome <i>var. Avenue *</i>            | simple rim (jar, bowl, bottle)  |
| Barton Incised <i>var. Barton</i>                 | oval lug (jar)  |
| <b>Barton Incised <i>var. Estill</i></b>          | elongated oval lug (jar)  |
| <b>Barton Incised <i>var. Midnight</i></b>        | strap handle (jar)  |
| <b>Barton Incised <i>var. Togo</i></b>            | <b>beveled rim (jar)</b>  |
| Baytown Plain <i>var. Baytown</i>                 | <b>folded rim (jar)</b>   |
| Bell Plain <i>var. Bell</i>                       | <b>peaked rim (jar)</b>   |
| <b>Carson Red on Buff <i>var. Carson</i></b>      | <b>thinned rim (jar)</b>  |
| <b>Grace Brushed <i>var. Grace</i></b>            | <b>incision perpendicular to rim on exterior lip (jar)</b>                  |
| Hollywood White <i>var. Hollywood</i>             | <b>downturning oval lug (jar)</b>   |
| Larto Red <i>var. Unspecified</i>                 | <b>downturning elongated oval lug (jar)</b>                                 |
| Leland Incised <i>var. Unspecified</i>            | <b>fat lug (jar)</b>  |
| Mississippi Plain <i>var. Neeley's Ferry</i>      | <b>loop handle (jar)</b>  |
| Mulberry Creek Cordmarked <i>var. Unspecified</i> | <b>intermediate loop/strap handle (jar)</b>                                 |
| Nodena Red and White <i>var. Nodena **</i>        | <b>tube handle (jar)</b>  |
| Noe Perforated <i>var. Noe</i>                    | <b>zoomorphic handle (jar)</b>  |
| Old Town Red <i>var. Beaverdam *</i>              | burnishing (jar, bottle)  |
| Old Town Red <i>var. Old Town</i>                 | thickened rim (bowl)  |
| Parkin Punctated <i>var. Parkin *</i>             | thinned rim (bowl)  |
| <b>Pouncey Pinched <i>var. Pouncey</i></b>        | gently ungulating rounded rim (bowl)  |
| <b>Rhodes Incised <i>var. Horn Lake</i></b>       | large rounded notches (bowl)  |
| Walls Engraved <i>var. Hull</i>                   | <b>incision parallel to rim on interior, exterior, or top of lip (bowl)</b> |
| <b>Walls Engraved <i>var. Walls</i></b>           | <b>incision perpendicular to rim on interior or exterior lip (bowl)</b>     |
| Winterville Incised <i>var. Winterville</i>       | <b>oval lug (bowl)</b>  |
|   | <b>stepped bas relief design on interior of body (bowl)</b>                 |
|   | <b>burnishing (bowl)</b>  |

\*Type/variety present in late 14th century contexts

\*\*Type/variety present in very small numbers in 14th century

## *Parchman II*

Parchman II corresponds roughly to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. With the exception of the traits just listed as exclusively related to the Parchman I sub-phase, the core of the Parchman II assemblage looks similar. However, it is marked by a proliferation of ceramic types, varieties, and attributes not found in the earlier time period. Varieties of Barton Incised, including *Estill*, *Midnight*, and *Togo* appear in Parchman II, though all are significantly less common than *var. Barton*, the dominant decorated coarse ware in both assemblages. Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin*, which does

occur in late 14<sup>th</sup> century contexts, is more frequently associated with the later sub-phase. Additionally, the coarse ware varieties Pouncey Pinched *var. Pouncey* and Grace Brushed *var. Grace* make their first appearance. However, it is the increase in the frequency of fine ware vessels, especially those with painted and finely engraved or incised surface decorations, that really marks this sub-phase as distinct from what came before. Painted types such as Avenue Polychrome *var. Avenue*, Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam*, and Nodena Red and White first occur in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, but are found in greater numbers during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Carson Red on Buff appears only in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake*, and Walls Engraved *vars. Walls* and *Hull* mark the Parchman II sub-phase.

There is also an explosion of decorative attributes associated with the Parchman II sub-phase, as well as a number of attributes that drop out of favor. Jar rims, which were almost never elaborated in the earlier sub-phase now include beveled, thinned, peaked, and folded forms, as well as the more common simple rounded or simple flattened finishes. Jar rims are not typically further elaborated, but perpendicular incision on the exterior rim does exist. Perpendicular incision occurs on interior and exterior bowl rims in the Parchman II sub-phase, as does parallel incision on the interior, exterior, or top of bowl rims. None of these occur prior to Parchman II. Handle forms also occur more frequently and in greater variety. Both oval and elongated oval jars lugs are sometimes downturning, a trait not seen before Parchman II. One example of a “fat” lug also occurs. Other handle forms for jars include loop, intermediate loop/strap, strap, tube, and zoomorphic, while only strap handles were observed in the preceding sub-phase. Oval lugs are also found on some bowls. Burnishing of bowls is also in evidence (not observed in Parchman I, though burnishing was previously used to treat jars and bottles). One unusual bowl has a stepped interior design that was created by cutting away the clay around it to leave a raised design. The

atypical design and method of decoration, as well as the paste of the vessel suggest that it is non-local, though I have no guesses as to where it might have originated.

With two potential ceramic sub-phases thus described, the following chapter considers the Parchman ceramics assemblage from a functional perspective in hopes of elucidating some of the ways in which food and food related activities were practiced within the Mississippian community at Parchman.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CERAMICS AT PARCHMAN: VESSEL FUNCTION AND FOODWAYS**

So far, type and variety classification and attribute analysis have been aimed primarily at chronological reconstruction. In this chapter I consider the functional rather than simply formal attributes of ceramic vessels. Archaeologists have long recognized that people manufacture pots to be used for specific functional purposes (Braun 1983). In doing so, potters make choices about the size, shape, proportions, and raw materials of vessels that have direct consequences for their use. These “mechanical performance characteristics” include things like vessel stability, portability, access to contents, and resistance to mechanical and thermal shock (Braun 1980; Shepard 1956; Steponaitis 1984). Taken together, these characteristics determine the suitability of vessels for activities such as storage, preparation, cooking, reheating, and serving of various types of liquid and solid food. In some cases, these and other features can also be used to infer group size of participants and context of use.

Significantly, food and foodways are salient indicators of individual and group identity, and food-related events are frequently involved in community building activities, including those aimed at fostering social cohesion, emphasizing social difference, or both (Appadurai 1981; Blitz 1993b; Dietler and Hayden 2001; Kassabaum 2014:314-325; Twiss 2007; Van der Veen 2003). Welch and Scarry (1995:397) define foodways as the “whole complex of behaviors by which we produce, prepare, present, and consume” the foods we eat. As virtually all of these activities involve the use of ceramic vessels, these data can be used to interrogate the importance of

foodways at different scales of analysis. For instance, Briggs (2015a; 2015b) has discussed the connection between the “standard Mississippian jar” and the hominy foodway, pervasive among southeastern Native American groups during the Mississippi and historic periods. Briggs argues that the process of nixtamalizing maize established “a widespread cultural taste for lye and ash” (Briggs 2015b:120) among southeastern Indian groups and that the hominy foodway had widely shared social associations related to health and sickness, hospitality, and ceremonialism (Briggs 2015b:134). At another scale, we can look at vessel *assemblages* to determine similarities and differences among ceramic assemblages in various contexts. Welch and Scarry (1995:413-414), for instance, found that ratios of serving-to-cooking wares were higher at Moundville than at outlying sites, and that serving bowls at Moundville (e.g. flaring rim bowls) tended to emphasize the display of food more so than serving bowls (e.g. simple bowls) in non-Moundville contexts. These assemblage-based differences suggest that the population at Moundville may have benefitted from status-based (Welch and Scarry 1995) or kin-based (Scarry and Steponaitis 1997) provisioning from populations living in the hinterlands.

Hally (1984, 1986) provides a comprehensive review of the relationships among Mississippian ceramic vessel types and their performance characteristics in his study of ceramic assemblages from Barnett phase sites in northwest Georgia. Significantly, Hally draws on ethnohistoric literature regarding the food storage, preparation, and consumption habits of southeastern Indian groups to hypothesize about the intended use of distinct vessel categories identified in his sample. He found that domestic vessel assemblages tended to consist of various vessel shapes that occurred in multiple sizes that could be correlated with ethnographically observed food-related activities.

According to Hally, we can expect most Mississippian vessel assemblages to include a

large jar form for storing liquid food and one or two types of general purpose cooking jars for boiling and parching individual ingredients such as meat, maize or acorns. Small jars may have been used for cooking small quantities of foods that do not store well, such as beans. Jars were also used for rendering fat from animals and nuts, and for combining individual ingredients into various types of soups and stews. We should also expect at least one bowl form for heating and serving prepared dishes—rounded bowls are good for manipulating and serving liquid foods, while flaring rim bowls may have been used to serve dry foods. As most dishes were eaten communally from a shared vessel, there should be relatively few individual serving bowls or bottles.

While whole vessel assemblages are needed to do the kind of extensive analyses of which Hally provides an example (e.g. Brown 2005; Childress 1992; Cruciotti et al. 2006; Hally 1986; Pauketat 1987; Steponaitis 1983), in most cases archaeologists do not have access to complete whole vessel assemblages. In cases where whole vessels *are* available, they often come from burial contexts, which typically do not represent the full suite of vessels in use by a group of people at a given time and are thus problematic for our purposes (Phillips 1970). Consequently, we are in the position of trying to glean as much information as possible about the mechanical performance characteristics of whole pots from fragmentary sherds (e.g. Braun 1983).

Fortunately, rim sherds of sufficient size can be used to determine the orifice diameter of vessels, a measure which has been shown to correlate well with volume estimates for certain vessel classes, including jars and some bowl forms (Childress 1992:39; Hally 1983a; Pauketat 1987:113-114). Although it is not possible to determine size estimates for bottles from rim sherds, a distinction among bottles with different neck morphologies may be made on the basis of orifice diameter and may correspond to vessel classes with distinct uses. Basic vessel shape



can be identified for rim sherds that are sufficiently large, especially when more than one portion of the vessel (lip, neck, shoulder, body or base) is represented. Other attributes that give us information about how vessels were used include paste composition (Steponaitis 1983), use wear (Hally 1983b), and rim and handle morphology (Phillips 1970; Smith 1969). For instance, quantity, size, and shape of temper particles provide vessels with differential abilities to withstand mechanical and thermal shock. Steponaitis has demonstrated that course shell-tempered wares (such as Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*) are suitable for cooking foods directly over a fire, as the combination of paste and temper results in a vessel that can withstand high heat as well as dramatic fluctuations in temperature. Sooting as well as handle morphology may give clues about *how* vessels were used during cooking—i.e. suspended over a fire, sitting directly in fire, etc., while use wear such as pitting can indicate food preparation practices such as stirring, grinding, etc. (Hally 1983b).

### **Methods: Vessel Morphology and Function**

In my functional analysis of Parchman ceramics, I measured vessel orifice diameter by comparing the arc of rim sherds representing 5% or more of the total rim diameter of the parent vessel with a standard rim diameter and percentage chart. Whenever possible, I identified basic shape categories (jar, bowl, bottle) for rim sherds by visual inspection, with reference to illustrated whole vessel and rim profiles recovered from the northern Yazoo and adjacent regions (Brown 2005; Childress 1992; Crucioti et al. 2006; Hally 1972; House 1991; Lansdell 2008; Phillips 1970; Steponaitis et al. 2002). In some cases, I was able to assign sherds to secondary shape categories. For jars, these include simple and standard forms. Five subcategories of bowl

could be identified: simple, flaring rim, wide shallow, carinated, and restricted. Bottles were subdivided into standard neck, narrow neck, and wide neck forms based on orifice diameter (in the case of bottles this is related strictly to neck morphology and not to vessel volume). Though rarely evident, I made note of use alteration in the form of sooting residues. I also looked for wear or abrasion related to vessel use, though I did not find any unequivocal examples of this. These additional analyses, combined with paste characteristics and rim and handle attributes already recorded form the basis of the discussion on vessel function and use.

Several authors have considered how various physical properties of ceramic vessels relate to function and use from a cross-cultural perspective (Braun 1980, 1983; Hally 1983a, 1984, 1986; Henrickson and McDonald 1983; Shepard 1956; Steponaitis 1984). For the purposes of this study, I focus on the following physical properties that are measurable on the Parchman assemblage (or portions of it), which is comprised almost entirely of fragmentary pot sherds: vessel shape, ware, vessel size, use alteration, rim and handle form, and decorative embellishment. I will consider each of these in turn.

### *Vessel Shape*

Several aspects of vessel shape and morphology can affect a vessel's mechanical performance characteristics (Braun 1983; Shepard 1956). Most notably for the present purposes, ceramicists have examined: degree of orifice constriction, presence/absence of a neck, overall body proportions, shape and surface area of the vessel base, and rim and handle morphology.

Shepard (1956:28) proposes three main structural classes for ceramic vessels depending on the degree of orifice constriction, while Braun (1980, 1983), using essentially the same categories as Shepard, characterizes vessel types according to their differing degrees of access to

contents and security of containment. Unrestricted vessels, where the orifice is greater than or equal to the maximum diameter of the vessel, are suitable for purposes requiring manipulation of vessel contents (stirring, mixing, scooping), for display of contents, or for drying. While unrestricted vessels allow for easy access, they have low containment security and are therefore less suited to activities requiring that the vessel be moved or for purposes of storage. All unrestricted vessels in the Parchman assemblage are categorized as bowls and further subdivided into simple, wide shallow, and flaring rim bowls. Mechanical performance characteristics based on the particular body proportions for each subcategory are discussed below.

Restricted vessels, where the orifice diameter is less than the maximum diameter of the vessel, are well suited to containing liquids or solids with a minimum of spillage, though manipulation of contents can be inhibited depending on the degree of constriction (Shepard 1956:28). Additionally, orifice constriction prevents heat loss and evaporation of liquids, such as might occur during boiling or simmering (Hally 1986:279; Henrickson and McDonald 1983:631). Because of the high security containment of restricted vessels, they are also suitable for tasks that require moving vessels around, such as placing in and removing from a cooking fire. High containment security also renders them good for short- and long-term storage.

Restricted vessels in the Parchman collection include two different jar forms (simple and standard) that were manufactured on both coarse and fine shell-tempered ware. The collection also includes two bowl forms with restricted orifices (restricted and carinated). Mechanical performance characteristics and hypothesized uses of these vessel subcategories are discussed in the following section.

Necked vessels are those with narrow, vertical vessel portions that are distinct from the vessel's main body. The presence of a neck would provide very high containment security,

preventing liquids from slopping and liquid-like substances such as seeds or other small particles from spilling (Braun 1980:182; Shepard 1956:28). Additionally, a neck facilitates pouring. Necked vessels are therefore suitable for short and long-term storage and serving of liquids and other substances that behave like liquids. They are unsuitable for anything requiring manipulation of contents inside the vessel, though multiple ingredients could be combined by swirling, shaking, or steeping.

Necked vessels in the Parchman assemblage include three bottle forms, distinguished by neck morphology. These include narrow-neck, standard-neck and wide-neck forms. Unfortunately, only one bottle in the assemblage is sufficiently complete to determine overall body shape, making comparisons among bottles with different neck morphologies difficult.

Indeed, overall body proportions are difficult to determine for any vessel shape from fragmentary sherds. However, when observable, the overall shape and proportion can also give clues about function and use. Mechanical performance characteristics related to overall body proportions include things like vessel stability, ability to withstand mechanical and thermal shock, and heat transfer. For instance, Henrickson and McDonald (1983:631) have found that cooking pots have similar overall morphological characteristics cross-culturally. In effect, they are typically short and squat (“globular”) with a large basal surface area, both of which make for a stable vessel with efficient heat transfer.

### *Ware*

As discussed in the results of the type-variety analysis, the Parchman assemblage is overwhelmingly composed of two basic wares, both of which are shell-tempered. Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* and its associated decorated varieties (Barton Incised, Parkin

Punctated, etc.) make up the coarse shell-tempered wares, while Bell Plain and its associated decorated (mostly incised and painted) varieties make up the fine wares. This binary between coarse and fine shell-tempered wares is a common one for much of the Mississippian culture area, though it does differ markedly from Plaquemine period assemblages to the south.

Steponaitis (1984) and others have made the case that the size and distribution of crushed shell suspended in the clay matrix of ceramic vessels is directly related to the vessel's suitability for use as a cooking vessel. The abundance of coarse shell temper particles included in Mississippi Plain and associated coarse ware vessels increases the vessels' ability to withstand thermal stress, including sustained exposure to boiling temperatures as well as rapid and extreme fluctuations in temperature. Vessels with finely crushed shell (sometimes so fine as to be invisible to the naked eye) would be less resistant to thermal shock, but more able to withstand mechanical stress. These vessels would be more suited to serving and storage functions than to cooking over direct heat.

All three primary vessel categories at Parchman (jars, bowls, and bottles) were manufactured on both coarse shell-tempered and fine shell-tempered wares. As their temper properties impart different mechanical performance characteristics, vessels of similar shape but different wares were likely used for different purposes. Since this is the case, these vessels have been treated as separate categories in my analysis.

### *Vessel Size*

Based on a study of Mississippian vessels from Barnett phase sites in north Georgia, Hally (1984; 1986) argues that common Mississippian vessel shapes are frequently made in a variety of sizes that are intended for different purposes. Similar (though not identical) patterns in

vessel size modes have been identified in other Mississippian assemblages (e.g. Pauketat 1987; see Brown 2005; Childress 1992; and Cruciotti et al. 2006 for examples from the nearby Walls, Parkin, and Nodena phases).

According to Hally (1986:272), size modes for various vessel types vary according to three criteria: (1) the nature of the foodstuff being prepared, served or stored; (2) the size of the group; and (3) the context of food consumption. For instance, he identifies a tri-modal size pattern for pinched rim jars. The two smaller sizes are identified as general purpose cooking jars suitable for the preparation of foods requiring long cooking times. The smaller of these was used to prepare small quantities of foods, desirable in the case of small group consumption, or because the foods themselves were only available in small quantities (e.g. greens, mushrooms) or would spoil easily if not consumed quickly (e.g. beans). Additionally, certain ingredients could be prepared separately in small cooking jars before being combined together in larger pots. The medium sized cooking jar was used to prepare foods in larger quantities, either because the size of the group to be fed was large or because the cooked food could be kept for some time without spoiling (as in the case of fermented corn soup). Unlike the small and medium jars, the large pinch rim jar was identified primarily as a storage vessel due in part to its large capacity, high containment security, and the difficulty involved in moving the vessel when full (Hally 1986:285).

In the absence of complete or nearly complete vessels, vessel size and volume can be estimated by measuring the orifice diameter of rim sherds of sufficient size (Whallon 1969). Orifice diameter has been shown to be an accurate predictor of size for Mississippian jars as well as most bowl forms. Size and volume estimates for bottles are not predicted by orifice diameter. My analysis has shown that ceramic vessels from Parchman, like many other Mississippian

assemblages, were made in a variety of size classes. I therefore consider size an important variable in the following discussion of hypothesized use.

### *Use Wear/alteration*

Of all the variables discussed here, use wear/alteration is the only category that provides *direct* evidence of how vessels were used in the past. Examples of use wear or alteration include interior abrasion from the use of tools to stir, pound, or scoop vessel contents, corrosion of vessel interiors by chemical action (e.g. soaking maize in lye to make hominy), and deposition of carbon deposits in the form of soot or resin as a result of cooking over a wood-burning fire (Hally 1983b). As my functional analysis only considered rim sherds that were large enough to determine vessel shape, most specimens did not contain the body portions necessary to identify abrasion or corrosion on the interior of the vessel. Abrasion might also be expected to occur on the exterior rim or neck portions of vessels that were suspended, but I did not identify evidence of this wear pattern on any of the Parchman vessels.

I was able to identify sooting on a number of vessels. The location of sooting or carbon deposits has been experimentally determined to correspond to specific cooking techniques (Hally 1983b:7-10). Generally speaking, vessels that are placed directly in cooking fires accumulate soot deposits on the upper portions of the vessel (i.e. shoulder and rim). Vessels that are suspended over a fire accumulate soot deposits on and around the base. Most of my rim sherds did not include the basal portions and I did not observe any examples of basal sooting. I did observe sooting on the upper portions of multiple vessel size and shape classes, indicating that these vessel types were used for cooking or heating foods directly in a fire. I also observed interior sooting on two vessels, which could indicate that they were used to carry fire or that they

were turned upside down over a fire to trap heat in the manner of an oven (Hally 1983b:10; 1986:269).

### *Secondary Shape Features*

Some secondary shape characteristics such as rim and handle morphology also can be used to infer function. Rim angle may relate to pourability, while presence and location of handles can indicate that vessels may have been suspended over fire or that the vessel was moved frequently in and out of cooking fires. Additionally, coverings can be lashed to handles or under the lip of an outflaring rim (Hally 1986:281).

### *Decorative Embellishment*

While decorative embellishments are different from mechanical performance characteristics in that they do not directly affect a given vessel's ability to function well for a specific task, they can still give clues about the uses to which particular vessels were put. In particular, decorative treatment will tend to vary with the contexts of a vessel's visibility (Braun 1983:122). For instance, certain bowl forms are far more likely to have designs on the interior and/or exterior rim and lip portions than are jars, bottles, and other bowl forms, lending support to the idea that these bowls were used to serve food and other comestibles in special contexts. Painted or otherwise finely decorated vessels of all types may also have served specialized purposes. Sometimes, details of decoration and design have the ability to communicate culturally situated messages (Braun 1980:113; Pauketat and Emerson 1991). In other cases, decorative embellishments may have both aesthetic and practical uses. Burnishing can be considered decorative but is also functional in that it prevents the evaporation of liquids through the vessel



walls (Henrickson and McDonald 1983:633). Handles and other appendages may be decorative, functional, or both.

## **Results**

In the following section, I characterize the Parchman vessel assemblage in terms of the above characteristics that have been shown to relate to vessel function and use in the prehistoric southeastern United States and elsewhere (Braun 1980, 1983; Hally 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1986; Pauketat 1987; Steponaitis 1984; Wilson and Rodning 2002). Of the 1369 rim sherds recovered from the sample, basic vessel shape could be determined for 716. An additional 23 body sherds contained sufficient portions of the vessel to determine basic shape categories in the absence of the rim portion, bringing the total number of sherds for which basic vessel shape could be determined to 740. This number includes 513 jar forms, 168 bowls, and 58 bottles.

### *Jar Forms*

Jars are typically defined as having squat, globular or rounded bodies with slightly restricted necks. Two basic jar forms were identified in the sample (Figure 3.1). “Standard” jars are chiefly defined on the basis of an outsloping rim portion (Phillips et al. 1951:105). “Simple” jars have vertical or slightly insloping rim portions, the latter being equivalent to Steponaitis’s (1983:69) “neckless” jar. Given the fragmentary nature of the ceramic assemblage, it is impossible to know exactly how rim form relates to body shape in the Parchman sample. I assume that standard jars have fairly squat, globular bodies as a general rule, as the more complete vessel profiles follow this pattern. It is possible that simple jars have a somewhat

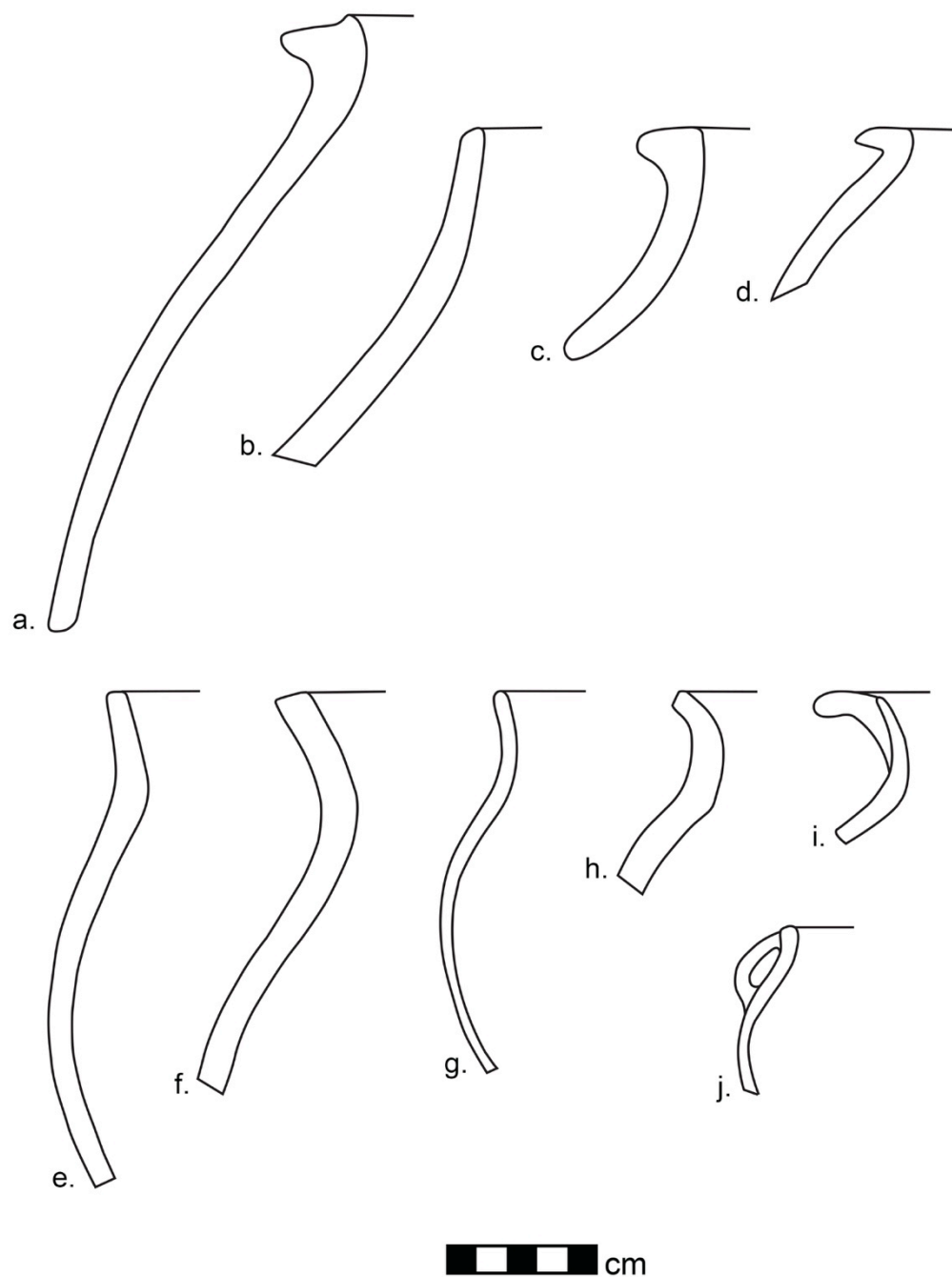


Figure 3.1. Examples of jar forms from Parchman Place (22CO511), including simple jars (a., b., c., d.) and standard jars (e., f., g., h., i., j.).

different body form—some of the largest may have deep, “ovular” bodies like Wilson’s (2008:102-103) large “thickened-rim jars.” It is also possible that there are different body forms for jars that do not co-vary with rim angle. However, Hally (1984) found two different jar forms at Barnett Phase sites in north Georgia, and Steponaitis (1983) and Wilson (2008) also report different jar forms for Moundville, so it is likely that they are somewhat different in form.

Out of the 513 jars identified in the sample, 337 jars from excavated contexts were assigned to secondary shape categories (“simple,” “standard,” or “indeterminate”). No further shape information was recorded for the remaining 176 jars, which were from the surface collection. Nearly 70% of the jars identified in the excavated sample were simple jars ( $n = 233$ ). Twenty percent were standard jars ( $n = 67$ ). An additional 37 vessels could be identified as jars but further classification was not possible. Table 3.1 distinguishes standard and simple jars. However, they are treated together in the following discussion regarding hypothesized use.

*Coarse vs. Fine Ware Jars.* The overwhelming majority of jars from both excavated and surface collected contexts are constructed of coarse shell-tempered wares, reflecting the functional use of jar forms, which are primarily used for cooking and reheating foods over the direct heat of a fire. Using coarsely ground or crushed shell as a tempering agent improves the thermal performance characteristics of ceramic vessels, allowing coarse shell-tempered wares to withstand extreme temperatures as well as dramatic temperature fluctuations (Steponaitis 1984).

Of 513 vessels identified as jars in the total sample, 90.6% ( $n = 465$ ) are on coarse shell-tempered wares and 3.9% ( $n = 20$ ) are on fine shell-tempered wares. The remaining 28 jars were on clay-tempered or indeterminate wares. For 300 jars, secondary shape could be determined. Of these, 227 of 233 simple jars and 59 of 67 standard jars are on coarse shell-tempered wares, including Mississippi Plain *vars.* *Neeley’s Ferry* and *unspecified*; Barton Incised *vars.* *Barton*,

Table 3.1. Types, varieties, and shape for ceramic jars from Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Jars   | Simple     | Standard  | Indet. or Not<br>Recorded | Jar Total  |
|--|------------|-----------|---------------------------|------------|
| Mississippi Plain <i>var. Neeley's Ferry</i> | 97         | 26        | 76                        | 199        |
| Mississippi Plain <i>var. unspecified</i>    | 4          | 1         | 1                         | 6          |
| Barton Incised <i>var. Barton</i>            | 118        | 25        | 84                        | 227        |
| Barton Incised <i>var. Estill</i>            | 1          | –         | 4                         | 5          |
| Barton Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>       | 2          | 2         | 6                         | 10         |
| Winterville Incised <i>var. Winterville</i>  | 3          | 2         | 2                         | 7          |
| Winterville Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>  | 1          | 1         | 1                         | 3          |
| Parkin Punctated <i>var. Parkin</i>          | 1          | 1         | 4                         | 6          |
| Parkin Punctated <i>var. unspecified</i>     | –          | 1         | –                         | 1          |
| Pouncey Pinched <i>var. Pouncey</i>          | –          | –         | 1                         | 1          |
| Bell Plain <i>var. Bell</i>                  | 2          | 1         | 16                        | 19         |
| Old Town Red <i>var. Beaverdam</i>           | –          | –         | 1                         | 1          |
| Unidentified Plain                           | 2          | 4         | 14                        | 20         |
| Unidentified Incised                         | 2          | 3         | 3                         | 8          |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>233</b> | <b>67</b> | <b>213</b>                | <b>513</b> |

*Estill*, and *unspecified*; *Parkin Punctated* *vars. Parkin* and *unspecified*; and *Winterville Incised* *vars. Winterville* and *unspecified*. One indeterminate jar was identified as *Pouncey Pinched var. Pouncey*.

The 20 examples of fine-shell tempered jars included 19 on Bell Plain *var. Bell* and 1 on Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam*, a slipped Bell Plain paste. Both simple and standard jars are represented.

*Size Classes for Jars.* One hundred jars in the sample had rim sherds of sufficient size (5% or greater of total rim of vessel) to determine orifice diameter by comparing the arc of the rim to a standard rim diameter and percentage template. Eight jars were of indeterminate type and/or paste and are not included in this discussion. Of the 92 remaining jars, 88 were manufactured on coarse shell-tempered paste equivalent to Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*, while four are on fine shell-tempered paste equivalent to Bell Plain *var. Bell*. They range from 7-

50+ cm in diameter, with the majority of examples ( $n = 77$  or 83.7%) falling between 10 and 40 cm. A frequency histogram of the resulting orifice diameters reveals some patterning in the data (Figure 3.2). Four coarse ware jars and one fine ware jar have orifice diameters of less than ten centimeters, making up the smallest size class (“very small”) in the sample. At the other end of the distribution, ten vessels fall into the “very large” category, with rim diameters of 45-50 cm. All of these are made with course shell-tempered wares. The majority of jars falls between these two extremes and appear to be made up of three mid-range size classes, illustrated by the trimodal distribution of jars ranging in diameter from 10-40 cm. The “small jar” category includes both coarse ware ( $n = 25$ ) and fine ware ( $n = 2$ ) jars with orifice diameters ranging from

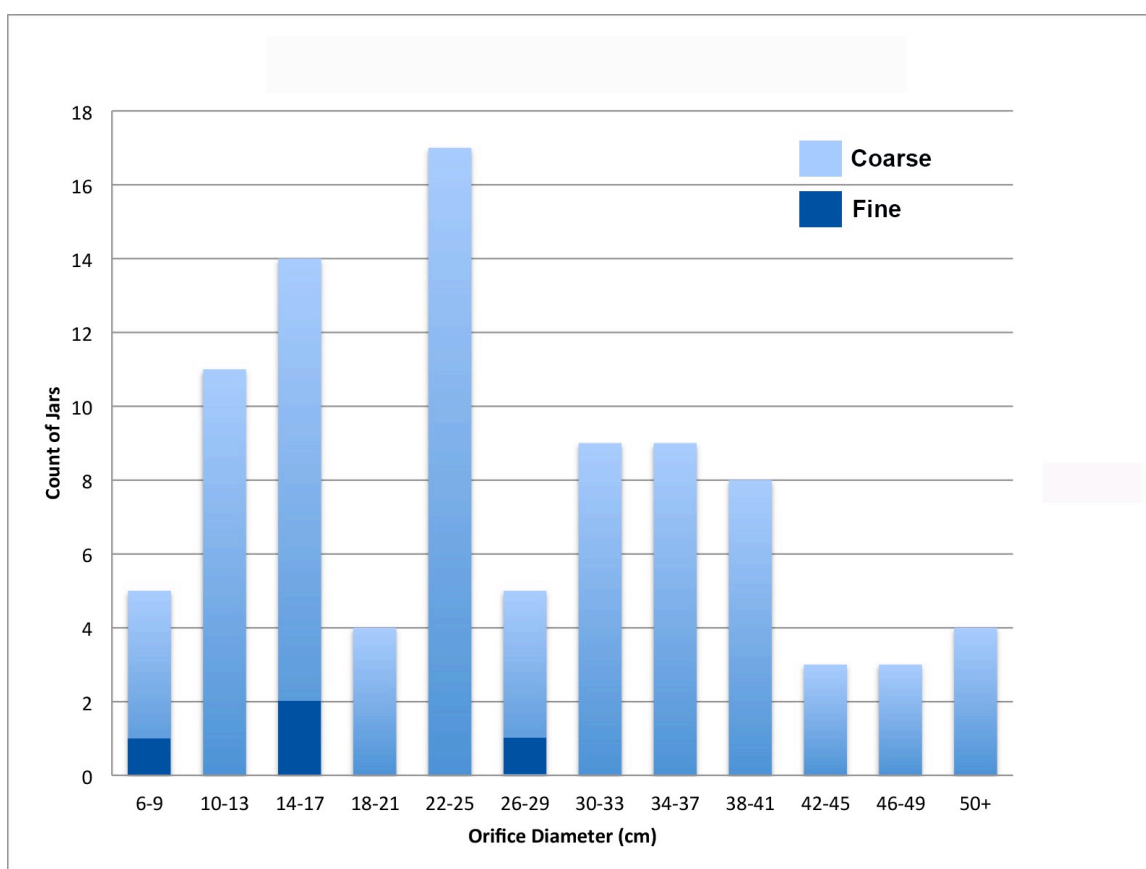


Figure 3.2. Frequency histogram of jar sizes distinguishing coarse ware ( $n = 88$ ) and fine ware ( $n = 4$ ) jars from Parchman Place (22CO511).

10-18 cm. The “medium jar” category includes coarse ware ( $n = 23$ ) and fine ware ( $n = 1$ ) jars with orifice diameters ranging from 20-28 cm (though most jars in this category fall between 22 and 25 cm). Twenty-six jars, ranging in orifice diameter from 30-40 cm, make up the “large jar” category. As with “very large” jars, all vessels falling into the “large” category are made of coarse shell-tempered ware.

Coarse ware jars, then, run the gamut of sizes, from very small to very large, while fine ware jars are present only in the three smallest size categories: very small, small, and medium (see Figure 3.2). There is also some potentially interesting size patterning among plain vs. decorated coarse ware jars. Coarse ware jars whose orifice diameters could be measured occur on Mississippi Plain ( $n = 40$ ), Barton Incised ( $n = 43$ ), Parkin Punctated ( $n = 3$ ), and Winterville

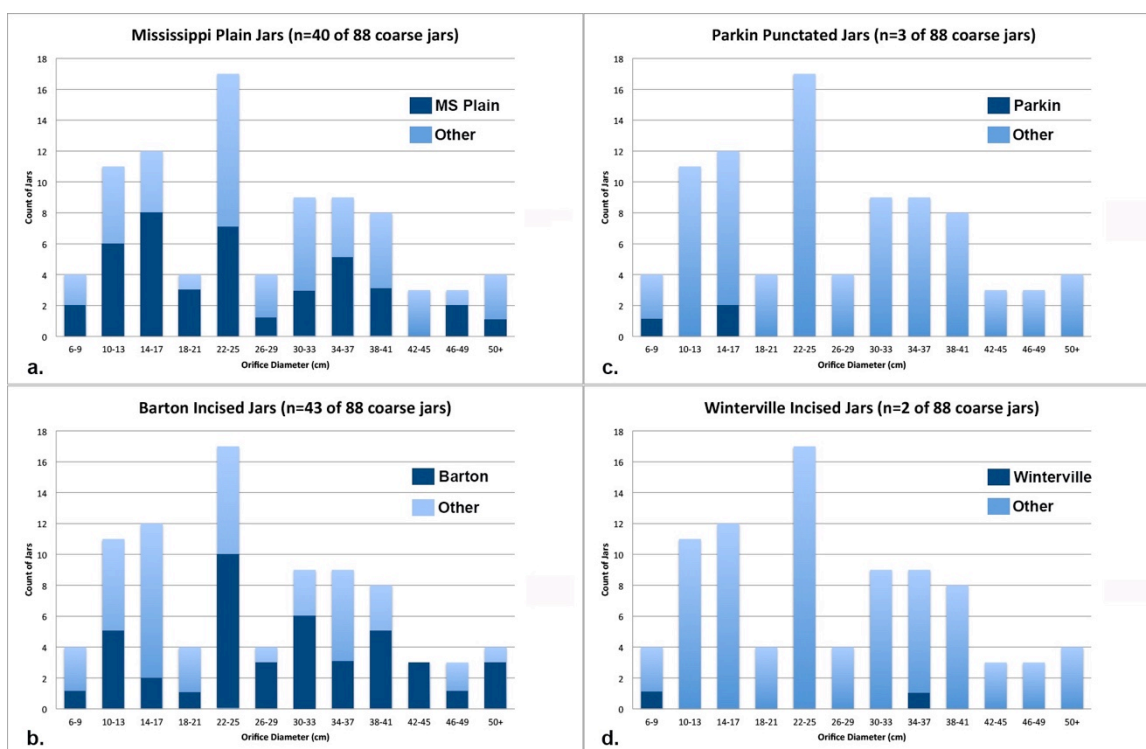


Figure 3.3. Frequency histograms of orifice diameters for: (a.) Mississippi Plain jars, (b.) Barton Incised jars, (c.) Parkin Punctated jars, and (d.) Winterville Incised jars from Parchman Place (22CO511).

Incised ( $n = 2$ ) varieties (Figure 3.3). Mississippi Plain and Barton Incised varieties, which occur in roughly equal proportions, are associated with all size classes and follow (actually, they control) the overall distribution. Winterville Incised jars occur in the very small and large categories. Parkin Punctated jars only occur in the two smallest size categories.

*Use Wear.* As jars are typically understood to be cooking vessels, we might expect to see sooting in the form of carbon deposits or resins associated with vessel classes used directly or indirectly over a cooking fire (Hally 1983b). Evidence of sooting was recorded on 16 jars in the sample and appeared: (1) on and below the lip ( $n = 1$ ), (2) on the neck only ( $n = 7$ ), (3) on the neck and shoulder ( $n = 6$ ), and (4) on the shoulder only ( $n = 2$ ). The fragmentary nature of the rim sherds analyzed likely accounts for much of the variation in the location of sooting. In any case, sooting and/or resin on the upper portions of vessels (including shoulder, neck and lip) has been shown to indicate that vessels were placed directly in cooking fires (Hally 1983b:10). The analysis did not include sherds from vessel portions other than rims, so whether sooting occurs on basal or other body sherds is unknown.

Comparing the presence of sooting to the size distribution of jars (Figure 3.4), we can see that sooting is most common on coarse ware jars falling into the “small” and “medium” size categories, including Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry*, Bell Plain *var. Bell*, and Parkin Punctated jars. Five of 25 (20%) “small” jars and 4 of 23 (17.4%) “medium” jars had sooting. One of 26 (3.8%) “large” jars and one of seven (14.3%) “very large” jars exhibit sooting (both Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry*). Both simple and standard coarse ware jars are sooted (8 examples each). Fine ware jars are never sooted.

*Secondary Shape Features: Rim Form, Handles, and Lip Embellishment.* The overwhelming majority of both simple and standard jars had either simple flattened or simple

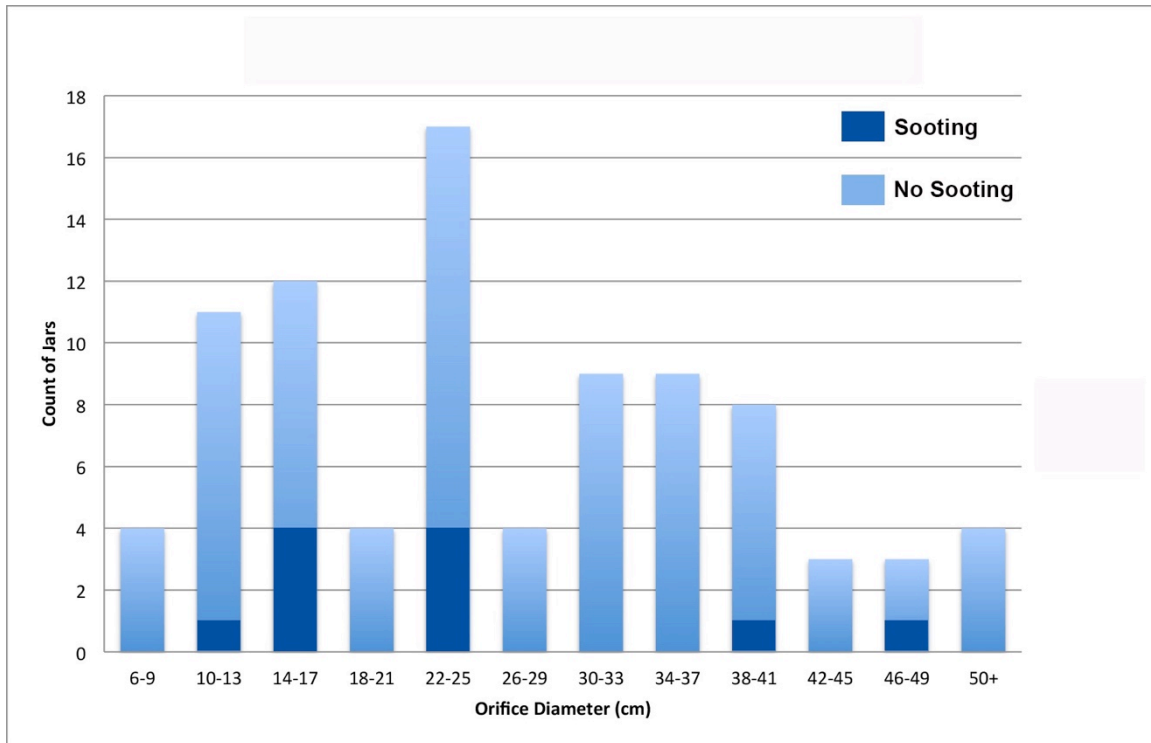


Figure 3.4. Frequency histogram of coarse ware jars from Parchman Place (22CO511) with sooted jars (n = 11) highlighted.

rounded rim treatments and these occurred in roughly equal proportions—of 294 simple and standard jars where rim treatment was determined, 142 (48.3%) were simple flattened (including all three fine shell-tempered jars) and 122 (41.5%) were simple rounded; 20 (6.8%) were intermediate between simple rounded and simple flattened. The remaining jars had rims that were: folded (4 examples), thinned and rounded (3 examples), beveled (2 examples), and “peaked” then flattened (1 example).

Within the jar sample, there are 72 instances of vessels with handles, including lug, loop, strap, tube/wide strap, and zoomorphic handles. Several variations on the general idea of a lug handle include oval lugs, elongated oval lugs, and “fat” lugs. Both oval and elongated oval lugs are sometimes “downturning.”

Oval lug handles (n = 15) and downturning oval lug handles (n = 4) appear on both



simple and standard jars and with simple rounded and simple flattened rims. In all but one case, the lug was adjacent to the top of the rim (forming part of the rim); one was attached 2 cm below the rim. In one instance a downturning oval lug was associated with a thinned rounded rim. Elongated oval lug handles (n = 5) and downturning elongated oval lug handles (n = 2) appear on simple and standard jars with simple flattened rims. In one instance, a “fat” lug was associated with a standard Barton Incised *var. unspecified* jar with a simple flattened rim. One elongated oval lug handle was associated with a (small) Bell Plain *var. Bell* jar; all other lug handles occurred on jars with coarse shell-tempered paste, including Mississippi Plain *vars. Neeley’s Ferry* and *unspecified*, Barton Incised *vars. Barton* and *unspecified*; Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin*, and Winterville Incised *var. unspecified*.

Both loop and strap handles are relatively rare in the jar sample. Two instances of loop handles occurred on standard coarse shell-tempered jars with simple rounded rims (one Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry* and one unidentified incised). Strap handles (4) occurred on standard coarse shell-tempered jars with simple flattened or simple rounded rims (including Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry*, Barton Incised *var. Barton*, and Parkin Punctated *var. unspecified*). One intermediate loop/strap handle was associated with a standard jar of indeterminate paste with a folded rim. One tube or wide strap handle occurred on a simple Barton Incised *var. Barton* jar with a simple rounded rim. All strap handles are of the “parallel” type—“triangular” strap handles do not occur in the Parchman sample.

One example of a zoomorphic handle occurs on a simple Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry* jar with a simple flattened rim. Though the animal’s features are not defined enough to identify the species, it is clearly a four-legged creature with a long tail, possibly a feline or lizard form, with the head attached to the rim of the vessel and the tail attached at the base of the

handle.

Only three jars in the sample have embellished rims. All are simple coarse ware jars (Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* and *unspecified*). One has vertical linear incisions or notching on the exterior rim and falls into the small size category. Another has a “tiered” rim with diagonal ticking on top of the lip. The third has triangular notches cut out of the rim, resulting in a “crenelated” look. This last jar falls into the large size category and also exhibits sooting on the neck and shoulder, indicating that it was used for cooking directly in a fire. Five jars in the sample were embellished by burnishing, including four Bell Plain *var. Bell* jars (one each in the “small” and “medium” jar categories) and one Winterville Incised *var. unspecified* “very small” jar.

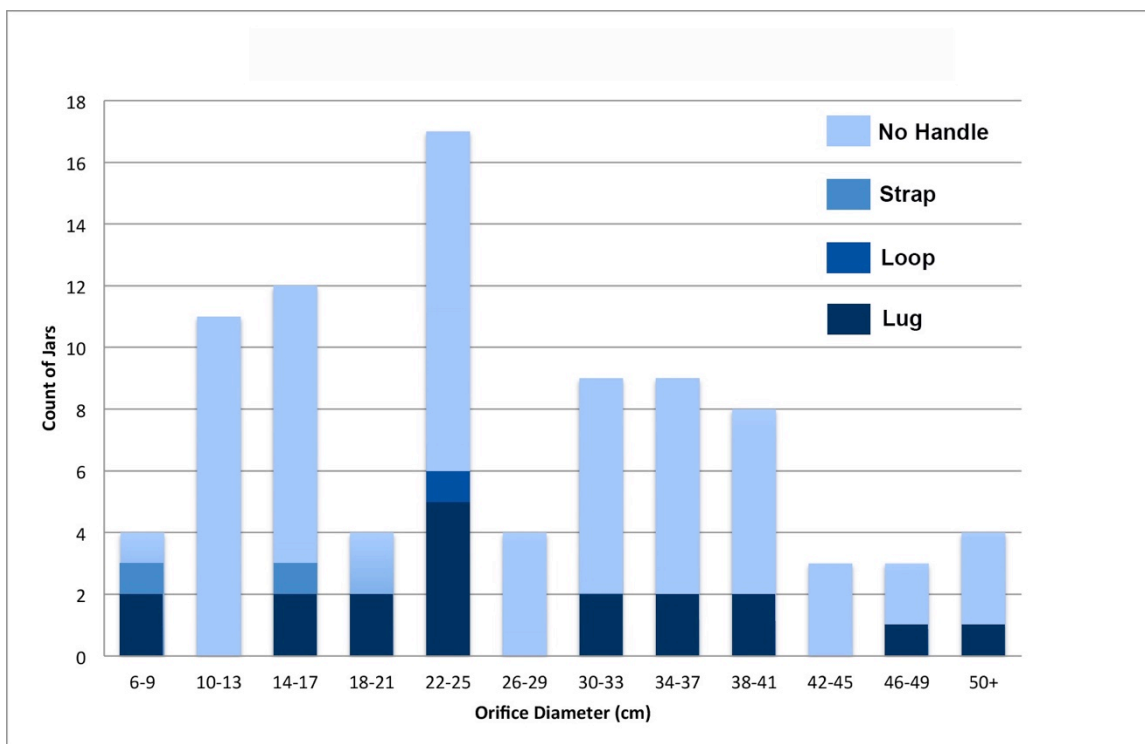


Figure 3.5. Frequency histogram of jars from Parchman Place (22CO511) distinguished by presence and type of handle.

Nineteen lug handles, two strap handles, and one loop handle occur on jars where orifice diameter could be measured (Figure 3.5). Lug handles are associated with all size classes, even size classes that do not exhibit sooting (very small jars) or exhibit very little sooting (large and very large jars). Perhaps this suggests that lug handles don't really have much bearing on vessel function, though one medium jar with lug handles also exhibited sooting. Strap handles occur on very small and small jars in the sample, while a loop handle is associated with one medium sized jar. The medium jar with the strap handle also exhibits sooting.

*Discussion.* Attributes that I expected to have some potential for predicting vessel use for jars included secondary shape (simple/standard), size, ware (coarse/fine), presence/absence of sooting, presence/type of handle, and (possibly) rim/lip treatment. However, after considering the jar assemblage as a whole, it is clear that some of these attributes are more closely related to vessel use than others. Neither secondary vessel shape nor rim/lip form appear to have any recognizable relationship with vessel size or presence/absence of sooting—simple and standard jars are present in all size classes and exhibit sooting at approximately the same rate. Given the fragmentary nature of the ceramics assemblage from Parchman, it is impossible to tell whether simple and standard jars differ simply in the angle at which the rim rises from the shoulder, or whether other differences exist that might affect the vessel's performance characteristics. Given this limitation, I have grouped simple and standard jars together in the discussion that follows.

Simple rounded and simple flattened rims are also associated with all size classes, with both standard and simple jars, and with sooting. This suggests that rim form has very little if anything to do with vessel function. Lug handles are present on jars of all sizes, while strap handles, much more rare in the sample, appear only on "very small" and "small" jars. Both lug

and strap handles co-occur with sooting on upper vessel portions.

I conclude, therefore, that rim/lip treatment and presence/type of handle do not predict vessel use within the ceramic jar assemblage at Parchman. Secondary vessel shape (at least as determined by rims) also does not seem to affect vessel function (but see caveat above). The primary considerations when discussing vessel function for jars, therefore, are paste composition or ware, size, and sooting, if present. Based on these criteria, then, I have identified the following functional classes for jars: very small (fine and coarse), small (fine and coarse), medium (fine and coarse), large (coarse), and very large (coarse). The following section summarizes the characteristics of these jar classes and offers some hypotheses for their intended use.

#### *Jar Classes and Hypothesized Use*

According to Hally's (1986) review of southeastern Indian foodways, jars were commonly used to prepare and cook foods using a variety of methods including soaking, boiling, parboiling, parching, fermenting, and heating/reheating. They were also used for storing unprocessed and processed foodstuffs, and occasionally for serving.

The most common method of food preparation was boiling, used to prepare a variety of individual ingredients as well as dishes that combine two or more ingredients (Hally 1986:268). Maize and beans, two staples of the Mississippian diet, were boiled for considerable lengths of time in preparation for direct consumption or for use as a main ingredient in soups and stews. Maize was frequently boiled in a lye solution in order to make hominy and was also parboiled in preparation for storage. Meat, though commonly roasted, was also boiled and added to soups and stews (Hally 1986:269). Nuts were processed in various ways by boiling. Acorns were boiled in water for several hours in order to remove harmful tannins. Hickory and other nuts as well as

oily seeds were boiled to release their oils, which could be skimmed from the surface and used as a flavoring in various dishes or as a kind of sauce for dipping (Hally 1986:271). Bear oil may also have been obtained and eaten in this way.

Jars were also used for soaking foods as a preliminary step in the processing sequence, as when foods that were stored in a dried state (parched maize, hominy, beans, starchy seeds) were rehydrated prior to consumption or further processing. Soaking can also change the nature of the food, as in nixtamalization, a process that increases the nutritional value of maize and makes it easier to grind. Briggs (2015b) considers nixtamalization of maize using wood ash or lye and its resulting product, hominy, to be a dietary staple among Mississippian people that can be made into a number of distinct dishes. The hominy foodway also served important social functions, including “domestic and community-wide practices that established a particular taste for lye and ash” (Briggs 2015b:112). Another process that transforms foods in the absence of heat is fermentation. According to Hally, corn soup or *sofkee* was allowed or encouraged to ferment and stood available in jars for household members or guests to eat at any time (Hally 1986:269), again promoting a particular pattern of sociality among household and community members. Finally, multiple ingredients that were boiled or otherwise processed separately were frequently combined into some kind of liquid or semi-liquid soup, then heated or reheated to complete the dish.

Jars, especially large ones, were also used for long- and short-term storage of a number of foods (Hally 1986:270-272). Maize and hominy were parched and stored in large quantities for extended periods of time, either in whole kernel form or after being ground into a meal. Other foods such as nuts, oily and starchy seeds, and beans may also have been stored in their dried form. Even highly perishable foods such as fruits, meats, and shellfish could have been preserved

by drying or smoking and stored for later consumption. Jars were also used to store liquids and semi-liquids such as water, bear oil, and hickory nut oil, and for prepared foods such as fermented corn soup.

Finally, jars may also have been used as serving vessels, especially for everyday use. Corn soup, for instance, is thought to have been available in jars for anyone within the household to help themselves to. Other prepared dishes may have been served directly from the jar they were cooked or heated in. Small jars may have been used to served condiments or sauces such as bear or nut oil or salt solution (Hally 1986:271).

The following functional vessel classes were identified in the Parchman ceramics sample, each with a particular set of mechanical performance characteristics that are hypothesized to correspond with use.

*Very Small Jars.* Very small jars are those with orifice diameters of 6-9 cm (Figure 3.6). There is one example in the sample of a very small fine ware (Bell Plain *var. Bell*) indeterminate jar with a burnished exterior surface. There are four examples in the sample of coarse shell-tempered very small jars, including Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*, Winterville Incised *var. unspecified*, and Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin*. Four additional very small jars were of

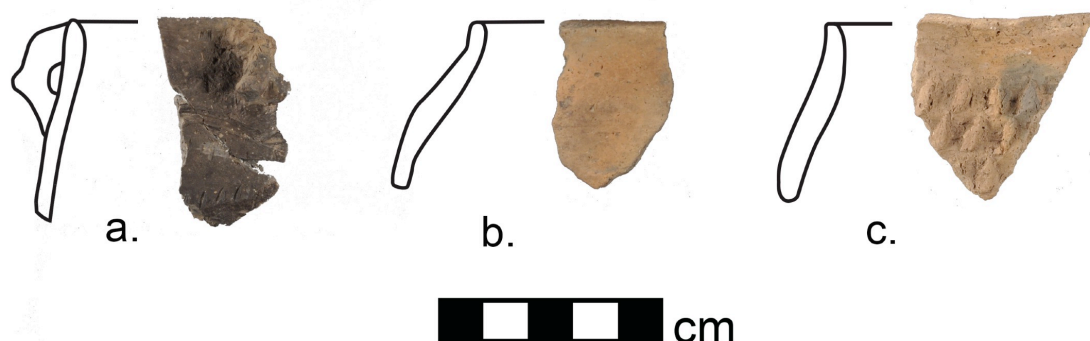


Figure 3.6. Examples of very small jars (6-9 cm in orifice diameter) from Parchman Place (22CO511).

indeterminate wares. One of these was initially typed as Matthews Incised, however, it does not neatly fit the criteria described by Phillips (1970:127-8). Very small jars were made in both simple and standard shapes and all have simple rounded or intermediate rims. The Winterville Incised jar is burnished on both the interior and exterior surfaces, which is unusual for coarse shell-tempered vessels. Despite low numbers, very small jars are fairly widely distributed at the site, occurring in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and in mound and neighborhood contexts.

The rarity of these jars in the Parchman sample suggests a specialized, non-everyday use. Further, their small size and orifice as well as their easily covered shape may have rendered them suitable for holding rare, valuable or perishable goods. Some possibilities include prepared condiments or various herbs used for flavoring food or for medicinal or ritual use. They also could have contained small amounts of non-food products such as pigments. The lack of evidence for sooting indicates that these vessels were probably not placed directly in fires, though the coarse shell-tempered jars could have withstood some degree of thermal shock. Burnishing on two examples further suggests the “special” nature of their contents, contexts of use, or both. Burnishing may also have made these jars more suitable for holding liquids as the burnishing would prevent evaporation through the vessel walls.

*Small Fine Ware Jars.* Small jars measure from 10-18 cm in orifice diameter. There are two examples in the sample of small fine ware jars, both classified as Bell Plain *var. Bell* (Figure 3.7). They come in standard and indeterminate secondary shapes with simple flattened and simple rounded rims. The standard jar has an elongated oval lug handle. Neither jar is burnished. Small fine ware jars could be easily covered because of their outflaring rim, horizontal orifice, and lug handles (when present). They were probably not used for cooking, since fine ware vessels never show sooting and their resistance to thermal shock would be less optimal than their

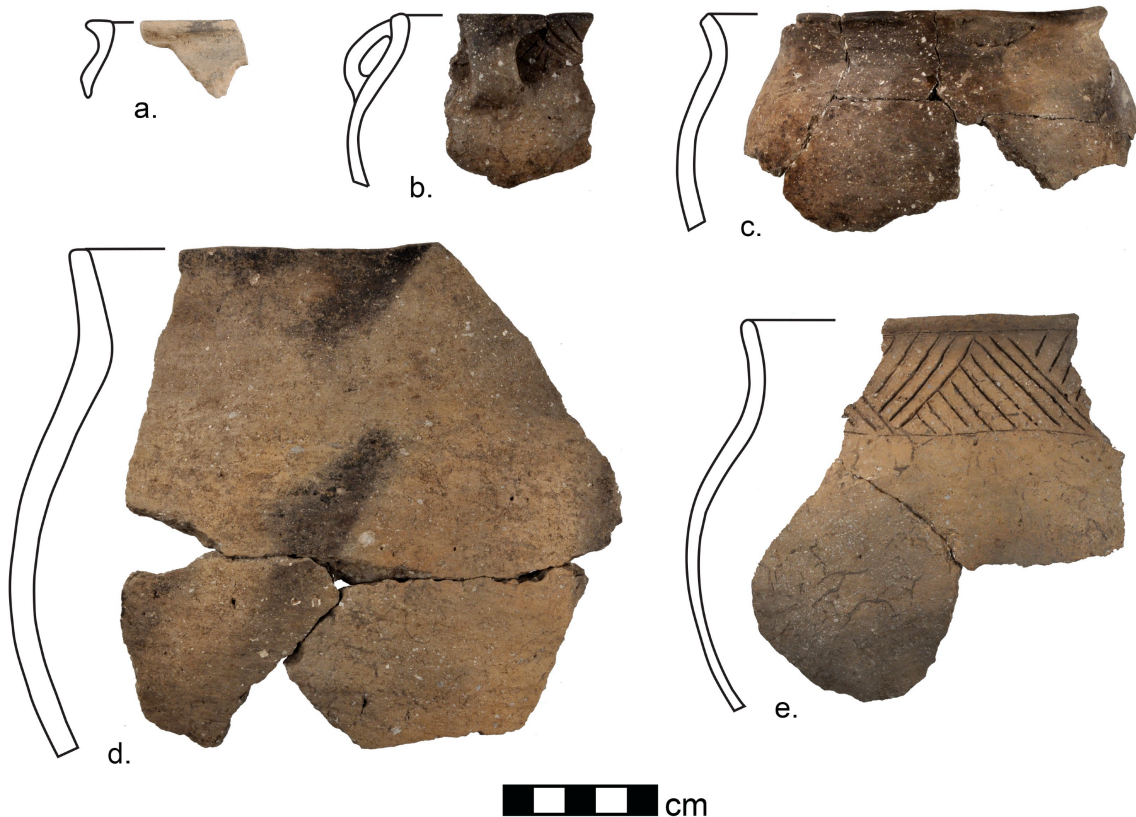


Figure 3.7. Examples of small (a., b., c.) and medium (d., e.) jars from Parchman Place (22CO511). Example a. is manufactured on a fine Bell Plain paste, while the others are of coarse ware paste equivalent to Mississippi Plain var. *Neeley's Ferry*.

coarse ware counterparts. The most likely use for these vessels is short-term storage or serving of small amounts of prepared food. In particular, foods with a high potential for spoilage (such as beans) may have been stored and served in these jars. Their extreme rarity in the sample indicates that they were not in common use.

*Small Coarse Ware Jars.* Small coarse ware jars are much more common in the sample, with twenty-five examples identified (four small jars had unidentified wares). Small coarse ware jars were manufactured on Mississippi Plain vars. *Neeley's Ferry* and *unspecified*, Barton Incised var. *Barton*, and Parkin Punctated vars. *Parkin* and *unspecified* (Figure 3.7). They come in both simple and standard jar shapes and have simple rounded, simple flattened, simple



intermediate, and thinned rounded rims. Six jars have lug handles including indeterminate (n = 1), oval (n = 4), and downturning oval (n = 1) shapes. One Barton Incised *var. Barton* and one Parkin Punctated *var. unspecified* jar had parallel strap handles. Five jars had sooting on the exterior neck and shoulder portions. One Mississippi Plain *var. unspecified* jar has linear incisions on the exterior lip portion. This vessel type is ubiquitous in excavated contexts at Parchman and occurs throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

These jars were likely used as small cooking vessels. Sooting on the exterior neck and shoulders indicates that this class of vessels was used directly over fire. Both simple and standard jars would have been efficient at absorbing and retaining heat as well as reducing evaporation. Both would also have been resistant to thermal shock. The outflaring rim of the standard jar would have facilitated pouring liquids, while the simple jar would have been less well adapted for pouring (Hally 1986:286). Handles would have allowed jars to be moved while hot and also could have been used to secure coverings. Handles (especially strap handles) also could have been used to suspend jars over a flame, though it was not possible to determine sooting patterns consistent with suspension from the rim sherd sample.

According to Hally (1986:287), this size jar would be suitable for boiling or parboiling small quantities of things that do not keep well after cooking or that are available or eaten only in small quantities. Beans, for instance, would have required boiling in liquid for several hours. Because they spoil easily, beans were probably cooked in small quantities for household consumption. Other possibilities include squash, greens, ramps, mushrooms, and small mammals. Small cooking jars also may have been used to prepare small quantities of individual ingredients that were later added to a larger cooking pot in order to make a stew or comparable dish (Hally 1986:269-271).

*Medium Fine Ware Jars.* Medium jars have orifice diameters of 20-28 cm. I identified one example of a medium fine ware jar in the Parchman sample (Figure 3.7). This Bell Plain *var. Bell* simple jar had a simple flattened rim and burnished exterior. Much like small fine ware jars, medium fine ware jars are exceedingly rare in the sample. Though larger in size and capacity, they share many mechanical performance characteristics with small fine ware jars and were probably used for short term storage or serving of small to medium amounts of food. As burnishing would inhibit evaporation, medium fine ware jars could also be used for storing liquid contents. Its rarity may also signify a “specialized” purpose.

*Medium Coarse Ware Jars.* There are twenty-three identified examples of medium coarse ware jars in the sample (Figure 3.7). All are Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry* (9) or Barton Incised *var. Barton* (14) simple or standard jars. Rims include simple rounded, simple flattened, and simple intermediate; one Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry* rim is thinned rounded. Handles included indeterminate lug handles (n = 1) and oval lug handles (n = 4, one of which is downturning and another of which is attached 2 cm below the rim). Lug handles appear on both Mississippi Plain and Barton jars. One Barton jar has a tube or wide strap handle. Four jars have sooting on the exterior neck and/or shoulder portions. Medium coarse ware jars occur with near ubiquity in mound and neighborhood contexts dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

This vessel category is likely a medium-sized general purpose cooking vessel. Sooting on the upper portions of four jars indicate that this vessel class was used directly over fire. Additionally, the globular shape and restricted orifice of jars make them efficient at absorbing and retaining heat, and reducing evaporation. The coarse shell temper and smooth, rounded profile make both simple and standard jars resistant to thermal shock. The outflaring rim of the standard jar would be good for pouring; access to the contents of the simple jar was more likely

facilitated by scooping or ladling. The short, squat shape of jars as well as their constricted orifices minimized spilling, while handles allowed vessels to be moved around while hot.

Medium coarse ware jars at Parchman are roughly equivalent to the “medium pinched rim jars” and “large Mississippian jars” of the Barnett Phase (Hally 1986:286-7). Hally hypothesizes that the mechanical performance characteristics of jars of this type are suitable for preparing large quantities of food by boiling as they would be suited to long cooking times, both high and low temperatures, and dramatic fluctuations in temperature. These jars would also be suitable for soaking foodstuffs in water for long periods of time before further cooking or storage, or for storing prepared food such as corn soup for intermittent consumption (Hally 1986:269, 286).



Figure 3.8. Example of a large coarse ware jar from Parchman Place (22CO511).

*Large Coarse Ware Jars.* Large jars are those with orifice diameters of 30-40 cm (Figure 3.8). All 26 large jars identified in the sample were manufactured on coarse shell-tempered wares, including Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* (n = 11), Barton Incised *var. Barton* (n = 13) and *unspecified* (n = 1), and Winterville Incised *var. unspecified* (n = 1). Both simple and standard jar shapes are represented, with simple rounded, simple flattened, or intermediate rims. Six large jars have lug handles, including indeterminate lug handles (n = 2), oval lug handles (n = 3, including one downturning), and elongated lug handles (n = 1, downturning). Only one large jar has evidence of sooting on the exterior neck and shoulder. This jar is of Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* paste, has a rim diameter of 40 cm, and is also the only example of a large jar with an embellished rim—it has had triangular notches removed from the rim portion, resulting in a crenellated look. Large coarse ware jars are ubiquitous in mound and neighborhood contexts and occur throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Several of these jars are much larger than Hally's "Large Mississippian Jars" which range from 20-33 cm and are probably more appropriately compared with his "Large Pinched Rim jar," primarily for long-term storage. Unlike the quartz-tempered Barnett phase jars, however, the coarse shell temper of the large Parchman jars would offer resistance to thermal shock. Some large jars from Parchman *were* used for cooking, as evidenced by sooting on the upper portions of one example. Additionally, their mechanical performance characteristics compare favorably to those of the medium coarse ware jars discussed above. Despite similarities in overall body shape, proportions, paste and temper, and other attributes, however, the large size and weight of these vessels when filled would make moving them difficult. Like Hally's Large Mississippian Jars, these large coarse ware jars from Parchman were probably used primarily for storage (only one of 26 is sooted), though they could have been used to cook large quantities of food as the

occasion required.

*Very Large Coarse Ware Jars.* Very large jars range from 45 to 50 cm in orifice diameter (Figure 3.9). Ten examples of very large coarse shell-tempered jars are present in the sample, including Mississippi Plain var. *Neeley's Ferry* (3) and Barton Incised var. *Barton* (7) simple and standard jars, all with simple rounded or simple flattened rims. Four jars (both Mississippi Plain and Barton) had lug handles, including three elongated oval lug handles and one of indeterminate shape. One large Mississippi Plain jar had evidence of sooting on the shoulder. None have any other embellishments. Very large coarse ware jars were used throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and occur in mound and neighborhood contexts.

Very large jars are probably roughly equivalent to Hally's (1986:285-6) "Large Pinched Rim jar" (40-50 cm orifice diameter), hypothesized to function as long-term storage vessels for large quantities of liquid and solid foods. Sooting on one very large jar, however, indicates that



Figure 3.9. Example of a very large coarse ware jar from Parchman Place (22CO511).

the Parchman jars were at least occasionally used for cooking or heating contents. As with large jars, very large jars would primarily have been used for storage of large quantities of foods. With their very large capacity, they would have been difficult to move when full. Their restricted but still rather wide orifices would minimize spilling, while also facilitating removal of contents through scooping. Additionally, covers could be secured on standard jars (with outflaring rims) or jars with handles. Ethnographic accounts suggest that oil, water, and corn soup were stored in large jars. The lack of storage pits at Parchman also hints that grains and other dried foodstuffs may have been stored in large and very large jars within households or nearby (baskets could also have been used for this purpose). Some small and as-yet unexcavated structures evident in the geophysical data may have been used as granaries, but this would not preclude grain storage within households.

### *Bowl Forms*

Bowls as a group are a category of vessel that potentially have a number of functional purposes, as evidenced by various combinations of size, shape and paste/temper composition, as well as decorative embellishment. I identified 168 bowls in the Parchman sample. Of these, 116 could be assigned to secondary shape categories including: simple ( $n = 41$ ), flaring rim ( $n = 49$ ), wide shallow ( $n = 18$ ), carinated ( $n = 5$ ), and restricted bowl ( $n = 3$ ) forms (Figure 3.10). The remaining bowls were indeterminate in shape ( $n = 45$ ) or not recorded ( $n = 7$ ) (Table 3.2).

Simple bowls are more or less hemispherical in shape with no inflection points from base to rim. Forty-one examples of simple bowls are present in the Parchman sample, making up 35.3% of the sample for which secondary shape was determined. I consider wide shallow bowls to be a subset of simple bowls in that they do not have inflection points. However, they are

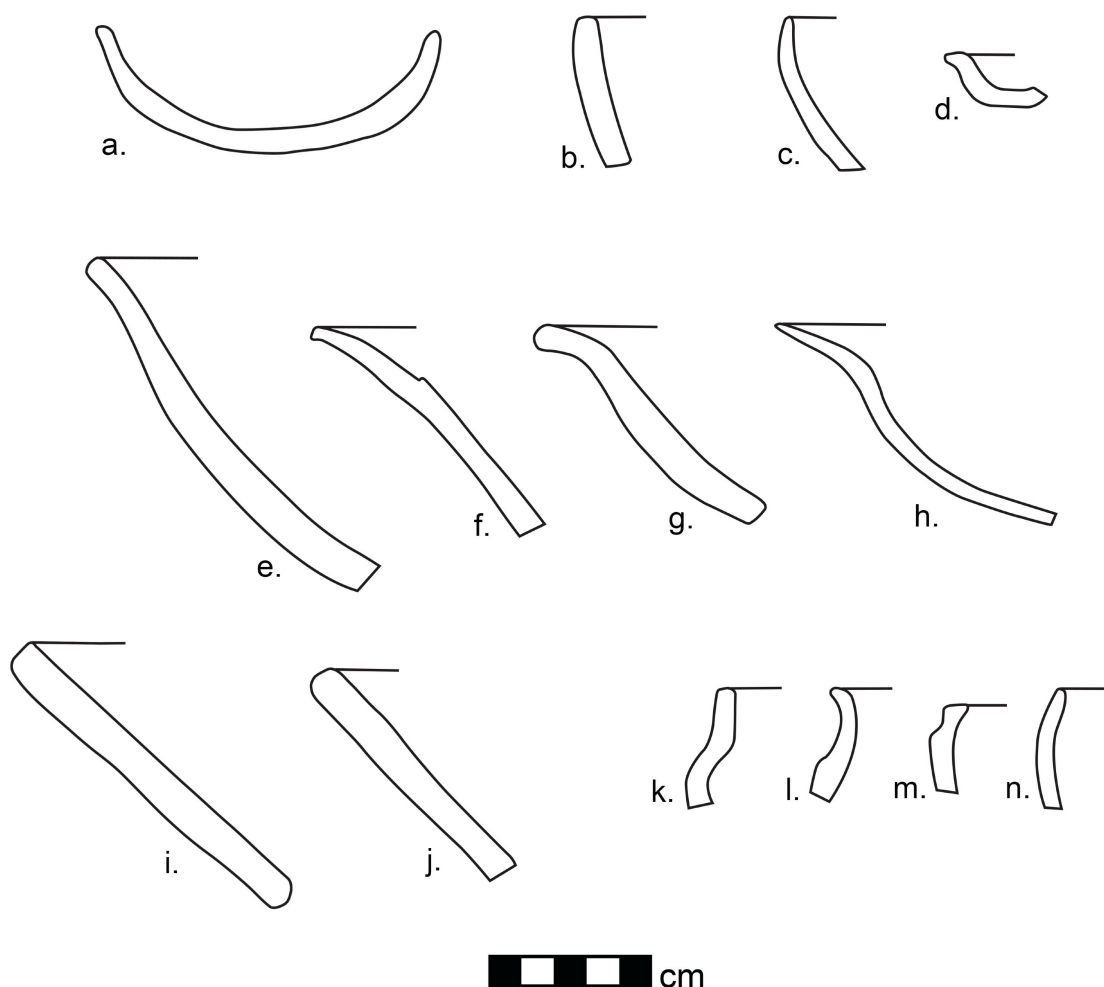


Figure 3.10. Profile drawings of bowls from Parchman Place (22CO511), including: simple (a., b., c., d. [with lug]); Flaring rim (e., f., g., h.); Wide shallow (i., j.); carinated (k., l., m.); and restricted (n.).

Table 3.2. Types, varieties, and shape for ceramic bowls identified at Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Bowls  | Simple    | Wide Shallow | Flaring Rim | Carinated | Restricted | Indet. or Not Recorded | Bowl Total |
|--|-----------|--------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| Mississippi Plain var. <i>Neeley's Ferry</i> | 15        | 14           | 15          | –         | –          | 11                     | 55         |
| Mississippi Plain var. <i>unspecified</i>    | 3         | 2            | 3           | –         | –          | 1                      | 9          |
| Old Town Red var. <i>Old Town</i>            | –         | –            | 2           | –         | –          | –                      | 2          |
| Bell Plain var. <i>Bell</i>                  | 7         | 2            | 15          | 3         | 1          | 14                     | 42         |
| L'Eau Noire Incised var. <i>unspecified</i>  | –         | –            | –           | –         | 1          | 1                      | 2          |
| Old Town Red var. <i>Beaverdam</i>           | –         | –            | 1           | –         | –          | –                      | 1          |
| Walls Engraved var. <i>Hull</i>              | 2         | –            | 5           | 1         | –          | 3                      | 11         |
| Baytown Plain var. <i>Baytown</i>            | 1         | –            | –           | –         | –          | –                      | 1          |
| Unidentified Plain                           | 13        | –            | 8           | 1         | 1          | 21                     | 44         |
| Unidentified Incised                         | –         | –            | –           | –         | –          | 1                      | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>41</b> | <b>18</b>    | <b>49</b>   | <b>5</b>  | <b>3</b>   | <b>52</b>              | <b>168</b> |

“truncated” so as to be shallower than simple (hemispherical) bowls. They are substantially more wide than deep, with a lower center of gravity and a larger orifice relative to height. There are 18 examples of wide shallow bowls in the sample. Taken together, simple bowls and wide shallow bowls make up just over 50% of bowls for which secondary shape could be determined.

Flaring rim bowls are the most numerous bowl type in the Parchman sample, with 49 examples identified (42.2% bowls for which secondary shape could be determined). Flaring rim bowls have a simple body with an outflaring rim where the inflection point between the body and rim can be either smooth or sharp. Two types of flaring rim bowls are sometimes distinguished in Mississippian assemblages. Childress (1992:37), for instance, describes both shallow flaring rim bowls and deep flaring rim bowls from burial contexts at Chucalissa. In his assemblage, shallow flaring rim bowls were exclusively manufactured using Bell Plain paste and presumably functioned in similar ways to other bowl forms. Deep flaring rim bowls, on the other hand, were made of coarse shell-tempered (Mississippi Plain) paste and had handles and other attributes more usually associated with jars. Hally’s (1984:55) Barnett phase flaring rim bowl seems to more closely resemble the deep form from Chucalissa, while the flaring rim bowls from Parchman are uniformly shallow.

Carinated bowls and restricted bowls are both minority types in the sample, with 5 examples of carinated and 3 examples of restricted bowls. Carinated bowls can be identified by the presence of a carina, a more or less abrupt angle on the exterior (usually shoulder portion) of the bowl, resulting in orifice constriction. As in carinated bowls, the rim portions of restricted bowls narrow toward the top of the vessel. However, restricted bowls are “simple” in profile in that they do not have a sharp angle separating body from rim. In all three examples from Parchman, orifice constriction is fairly slight (as is constriction in the carinated bowls).



*Coarse vs. Fine Ware Bowls.* As with jars, coarse-shell tempered bowls would be resistant to thermal shock and would therefore be suitable for cooking and heating food directly over a fire. Conversely, fine ware bowls are more suited as serving vessels (burnished ones may be especially suitable for liquids or wet ingredients). Fine ware bowls have a more limited size range, occurring only in the small and medium size categories. However, they have a wider range of shapes than coarse ware bowls, as fine shell-tempered paste was used to manufacture simple, wide shallow, flaring rim, carinated and restricted bowl forms.

Of 168 bowls identified in the sample, 39.3% (n = 66) were manufactured out of coarse shell-tempered paste equivalent to Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*, while 33.3% (n = 56) were made of fine shell-tempered paste equivalent to Bell Plain *var. Bell*. One bowl was made of a clay-tempered ware (Baytown Plain *var. Baytown*), while the remaining 45 bowls (26.8%) were made of unidentified plain wares (excepting one example classified as unidentified incised). The high percentage of unidentified plain wares is perhaps artificially inflated due to imprecise recording in the initial sorting phase and thus requires explanation. Several small bowls in the sample are pinch pots made of untempered clay; several other examples (especially of flaring rim bowls) fell somewhere in between coarse shell-tempered ware and fine shell-tempered ware and were thus classified as “unidentified plain.”

Coarse ware bowls in the sample come in three shapes—simple, wide shallow, and flaring rim. They are made of Mississippi Plain *vars. Neeley's Ferry* and *unspecified* as well as Old Town Red *var. Old Town*, a red-slipped, coarse shell-tempered ware. Fine ware bowls come in simple, wide shallow, flaring rim, carinated, and restricted shapes. They are associated with Bell Plain *var. Bell*, Walls Engraved *var. Hull*, L'Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified*, and Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam*, a red-slipped, fine shell-tempered ware.

*Size Classes for Bowls.* Of the 168 bowls in the sample, 47 had rim portions sufficient to determine orifice diameter. When graphed in a frequency histogram (Figure 3.11), the resulting distribution of orifice diameters indicates the presence of 4 size modes among bowls recovered from Parchman. “Very small” bowls (n = 6) range from 2-7 cm in orifice diameter. These bowls are all simple pinch pot bowls of unidentified plain paste. “Small” bowls (n = 23) range from 10-23 cm in orifice diameter. This category includes both fine ware and coarse ware bowls. Shapes include simple, flaring rim, wide shallow, restricted, and carinated. “Medium” bowls ranged in orifice diameter from 25-38 cm. Medium bowls appear on both fine and coarse wares. Simple, flaring rim, and wide shallow bowls are manufactured in this size category. Six “large” bowls were identified in the sample, all with orifice diameters around 50 cm. The majority of bowls in

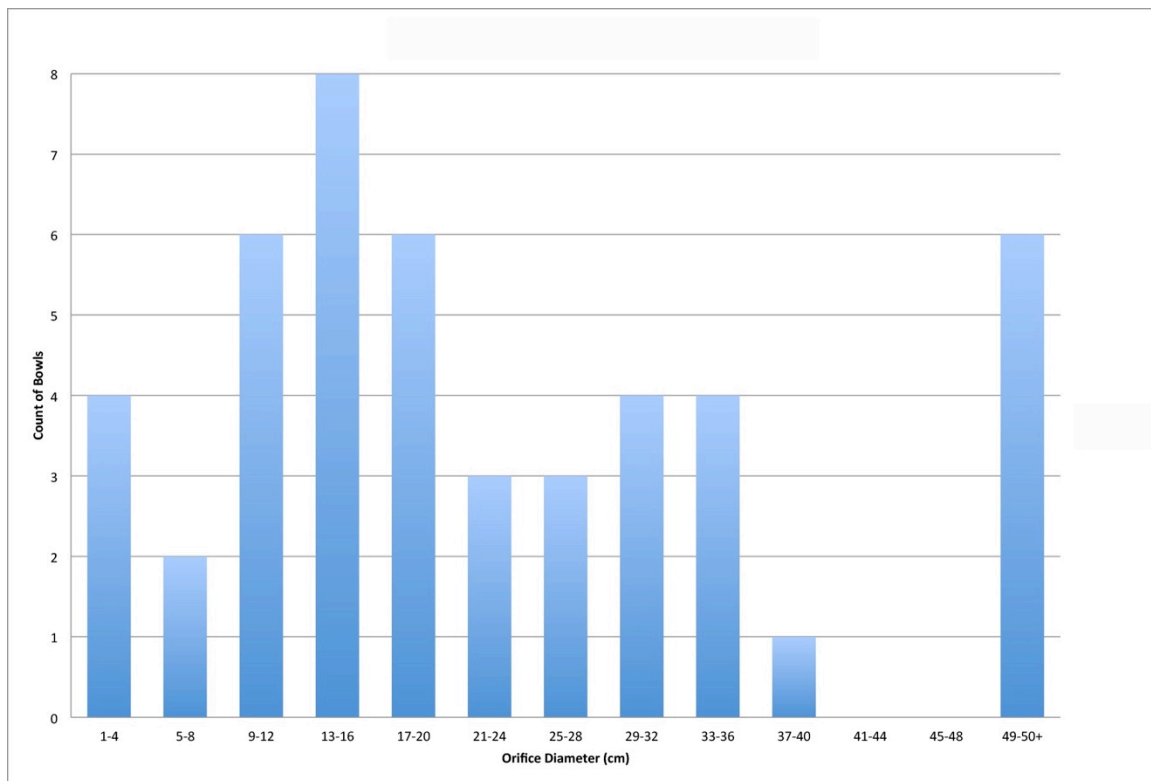


Figure 3.11. Frequency histogram of ceramic bowls from Parchman Place (22CO511) for which orifice diameter could be measured, indicating four size classes: very small (2-7 cm); small (10-23 cm); medium (25-38 cm); and large (~50 cm).

this category are wide shallow ( $n = 5$ ), while one example was classified as simple. All examples of large bowls were manufactured on coarse shell-tempered paste equivalent to Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*. Bowl shape and size categories are graphed in Figure 3.12.

*Sooting on Bowls.* Five bowls in the Parchman sample exhibit sooting. All are coarse ware bowls on Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* paste. Two are wide shallow bowls, two are flaring rim bowls, and the last is a bowl of indeterminate shape. Both flaring rim bowls with sooting also have a rim treatment consisting of large rounded notches removed from simple rounded rims. One has sooting on the exterior below the lip (e.g. where the rim starts to flare). The second has sooting on the interior of the bowl (Figure 3.13). Similarly, one wide shallow

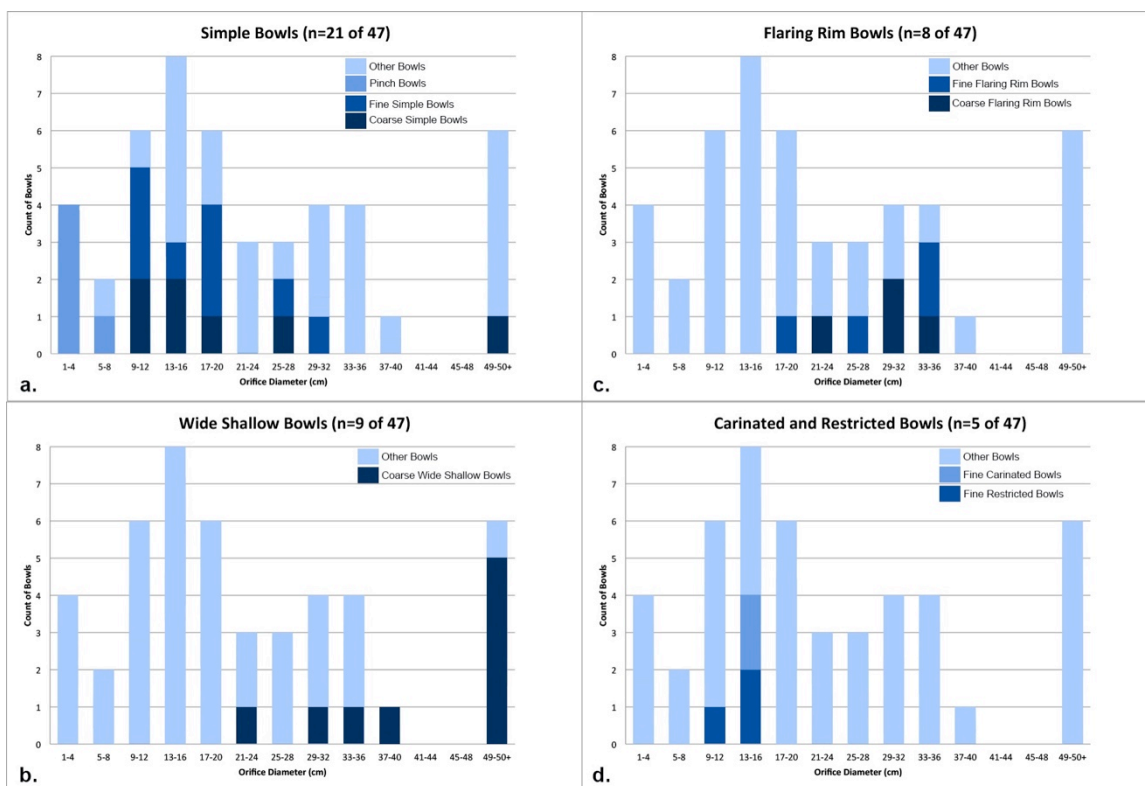


Figure 3.12. Frequency histograms of bowls by orifice diameter, highlighting: (a.) simple bowls; (b.) wide shallow bowls; (c.) flaring rim bowls, and (d.) carinated and restricted bowls.



Figure 3.13. Medium Mississippi Plain flaring rim bowl from Parchman Place (22CO511) with scalloped and incised rim and interior sooting.

bowl is sooted on the exterior below the lip, while the second exhibits interior sooting. The unclassified bowl has sooting on the exterior below the lip.

With reference to size, sooting on the exterior of the vessel is present in small and medium bowls and interior sooting is present on medium and large bowls. Both flaring rim and wide shallow bowls are sooted on the exterior and interior, implying that both bowl types were considered appropriate for cooking or heating food over a fire, and perhaps for use as “ovens” and/or for transporting fire, coal or ashes as described by Hally (1986:271).

*Secondary Shape Features for Bowls: Rim Form, Handles, and Lip Embellishment.* In contrast to simple and standard jar shapes, features like rim form, presence of handles, and decorative lip embellishment do have patterned relationships to vessel shape in bowls. Therefore, bowl types and their associated attributes will be described separately in the following section organized by form.

*Simple Bowls: Secondary Shape Features, Decorative Embellishments.* All coarse shell-tempered and most fine shell-tempered simple bowls are associated with simple flattened (n = 13), simple rounded (n = 11) or simple intermediate (n = 1) rims. Two fine ware simple bowls have fattened, rounded rims. The single clay-tempered simple bowl in the sample has a simple rounded rim. Five pinch pots of unidentified ware have simple rounded rims and a sixth has a simple intermediate rim.

Three simple bowls (two coarse and one fine) have lug handles. The two lugs associated with coarse ware bowls are oval and roughly triangular in shape. The lug associated with the fine ware bowl is broken and therefore of indeterminate shape. Additionally, one miniature pinch pot has oval lug handles (Figure 3.10 d.). No other handle types were observed on bowl forms and simple bowls are the only bowl forms that have handles.

Three simple bowls have embellished rims, including two fine shell-tempered bowls and one bowl of indeterminate ware. Embellishments on fine shell-tempered bowls include horizontal incision on the interior and exterior portions of a fattened rounded rim (Bell Plain *var. Bell* bowl) and vertical incisions on the exterior lip of a simple flattened rim (Walls Engraved *var. Hull* bowl). The simple bowl with unidentified paste also has a fattened rounded rim—this example has a horizontal linear incision at the base of the exterior fattened part of the lip. None of the simple fine ware bowls are burnished. No decorative embellishments were observed on coarse simple bowls.

*Wide Shallow Bowls: Secondary Shape Features, Decorative Embellishments.* Wide shallow bowls (Figure 3.10 i., j.) are associated with Mississippi Plain *vars. Neeley's Ferry* (n = 14) and *unspecified* (n = 2) and Bell Plain *var. Bell* (n = 2). Coarse ware wide shallow bowls have simple rounded (n = 8), simple flattened (n = 6), simple intermediate (n = 1), and thinned

rounded (n = 1) rims. Fine ware wide shallow bowls have simple rounded (n = 1) and simple intermediate (n = 1) rims. Five wide shallow bowls have “gently undulating rounded rims,” including four coarse ware bowls and one fine ware bowl, but no other rim embellishments were observed.

*Flaring Rim Bowls: Secondary Shape Features, Decorative Embellishments.* As stated above, flaring rim bowls (n=49) are the most numerous shape class in the assemblage, outnumbering simple and wide shallow bowls combined. This shape is common on both coarse and fine bowls, including Mississippi Plain *vars. Neeley’s Ferry* (n = 15) and *unspecified* (n = 3), Old Town Red *var. Old Town* (2), Bell Plain *var. Bell* (n = 15), Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam* (n = 1), Walls Engraved *var. Hull* (n = 5). Eight examples were classified as unidentified plain; many if not all of these were so classified because they fell somewhere in between the coarse shell-tempered paste indicative of Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry* and the fine shell-tempered paste indicative of Bell Plain *var. Bell*.

Both fine and coarse ware flaring rim bowls (Figure 3.10 e., f., g., h.) are associated with simple rounded (n = 28) and simple flattened (n = 9) rims. One coarse flaring rim bowl had a thinned rounded rim and one flaring rim bowl each of fine shell-tempered and indeterminate paste had simple intermediate rims. Flaring rim bowls of all types had additional rim embellishments. Most common were gently undulating rounded rims (6 coarse flaring rim bowls; 2 fine flaring rim bowls; 1 unidentified plain flaring rim bowl) and rims with large rounded notches removed (3 coarse flaring rim bowls; 4 fine flaring rim bowls; 1 unidentified plain flaring rim bowl). One of the coarse flaring rim bowls is nearly complete—it has four large rounded notches removed from the rim and also has linear incisions on the flared portion of the interior rim (Figure 3.13). Two fine flaring rim bowls also have linear incisions on the interior

lip. Other rim embellishments include triangular linear ticking on the interior lip (one fine flaring rim bowl) and notching on the interior lip (one fine flaring rim bowl), which results in a “scalloped” look. Finally, one fine flaring rim bowl has a stepped design on the interior body portion that was produced by cutting away the surrounding clay to leave a raised design (Figure 3.14). Two fine flaring rim bowls are burnished on both the interior and exterior surfaces.

*Carinated and Restricted Bowls: Secondary Shape Features, Decorative Embellishments.*

Carinated and restricted bowls (Figure 3.10 k., l., m., n.) in the Parchman sample do not occur on coarse shell-tempered wares. Carinated bowls (n = 5) are associated with Bell Plain *var. Bell*, Walls Engraved *var. Hull*, and unidentified plain types, while restricted bowls (n = 3) are associated with Bell Plain *var. Bell*, L’Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified*, and unidentified plain types. Simple rounded rims characterize these bowl types, though one Walls Engraved *var. Hull*



Figure 3.14. Small Bell Plain flaring rim bowl from Parchman Place (22CO511) with stepped interior design.

carinated bowl has a simple intermediate rim. This bowl also has a rim embellished with circular punctations on the top of the lip. A Bell Plain *var. Bell* restricted bowl has linear incisions on the top of the lip. None of the carinated or restricted bowls exhibits burnishing.

*Discussion.* Following the analysis of Parchman bowls, I conclude that the main considerations for determining bowl function are secondary shape, ware, size, and sooting, though decorative embellishments may also clue us in to vessels used for special purposes. Certainly, the prevalence of rim and lip embellishment suggests that many bowls were used in contexts where they were particularly visible, such as the serving of prepared foods to social groups of various size and composition.

#### *Bowl Classes and Hypothesized Use*

According to Hally's review of southeastern Indian food habits, bowls of various shapes and sizes are used primarily for preparing, cooking, and serving different types of food; they were seldom or never used for storage. Though most heavy cooking was done in jars, bowls made of coarse shell-tempered ware are also suitable for use over fire. Boiling has been documented in both rounded and carinated bowls (Hally 1986:269), though Hally hypothesizes that bowls were more often used for cooking processes that required relatively low temperatures, such as parching, frying, or baking. When used for baking, the bowl would have been placed upside down with coals placed over it so as to trap heat beneath it and cook the food (often corn meal bread or something similar) contained within (Hally 1986:269). Bowls were also likely used for the final heating of dishes made of multiple pre-prepared ingredients such as corn meal mush, succotash, and various soups and stews, which were then served in the same dish they were prepared in (Hally 1986:269; 288-289). The soaking steps required to process acorns or to



nixtamalize maize also could be accomplished in bowls, and foods such as fruits could have been dried in bowls that were sufficiently wide and shallow. Bowls would also be well suited for mixing wet and dry ingredients to make dough for bread, dumplings, or fritters (Hally 1986:289).

Despite the many potential uses of bowls for food preparation and cooking, as a class they primarily functioned as serving vessels. Their unrestricted orifices were ideal for displaying their contents and made the foods within easy to remove. The decorated rims on many bowls also point to a serving function, with the most finely made or decorated examples probably used in special or ritual contexts. Bowls of various shapes have been documented in the ethnographic literature as serving vessels for liquid foods such as soups and stews, as well as boiled maize and beans (Hally 1986:271). They would also have been suitable for serving solid foods such as fruits and vegetables, greens, nuts, meats and fish, and prepared foods such as dumplings or fritters. Small bowls may have been used to serve condiments or oils for dipping, or for foods that were rare or exotic. Finally, bowls were used in the preparation and serving of black drink in ritual contexts (Hally 1986:270).

Bowls (as well as jars) are also documented as having non-food related functions for historic southeast Indians, including transporting fire, soaking materials such as animal hides and split cane, tanning, and dying (Hally 1986:271).

*Simple bowls.* Simple coarse ware bowls come in small (n = 5), medium (n = 1) and large (n = 1) sizes (11 were of indeterminate size), while simple fine ware bowls are manufactured in small (n = 7) and medium (n = 2) sizes (3 were indeterminate). (Additionally, five very small simple pinch bowls were identified in the sample. These were all typed as unidentified plain). None of the coarse simple bowls (all Mississippi Plain) in the sample have evidence of sooting, so it is possible that simple bowls as a class were not typically used for cooking over direct heat.

However, coarse shell-tempered simple bowls could have had the potential for cooking or heating because their paste composition and rounded contours would have made them resistant to thermal shock. Two coarse simple bowls have lug handles, one oval in shape and one roughly triangular. The fine shell-tempered simple bowls occur on both Bell Plain and Walls Engraved *var. Hull*. They are largely undecorated, though two examples have incised lips and one has a lug handle of indeterminate shape.

Aside from the thermal and mechanical properties associated with their respective paste and temper combinations, fine and coarse shell-tempered simple bowls are alike in terms of performance characteristics. The unrestricted orifice and general stability of simple bowls would have facilitated the manipulation of contents by mixing, stirring, grinding, etc., though liquid contents would be prone to slopping. Contents could easily be scooped or ladled, facilitating serving.

Though their overall body proportions and mechanical performance characteristics are similar, simple coarse ware bowls would have varied in function according to their size. Most simple coarse ware bowls from Parchman were small, ranging from 10-23 cm in diameter. These are roughly equivalent to Hally's (1986:289) "small rounded bowl," which he interprets as a small serving bowl that was also used to manipulate small quantities of solid or viscous food. Hally's bowls were infrequently used over fire and there is no evidence of sooting on the Parchman bowls. Given their small size, they may have been used as individual or small group serving dishes or to serve foods prepared in small quantities such as condiments or dipping sauces. All examples of small coarse simple bowls were recovered either from Neighborhood 1 or from the initial construction stage of Mound E. Small fine ware bowls likely served a similar function.

Medium simple bowls from Parchman are seemingly equivalent to Hally's (1986:289) "large rounded bowl," which is interpreted as a general purpose mixing and serving bowl used to "manipulate and serve large quantities of viscous or solid material." Having similar body proportions as the small simple bowl, the medium size could be used in a similar way to prepare or serve larger quantities of food. Some differences between Parchman medium coarse ware simple bowls and the large rounded bowls of the Barnett phase may be significant. At Barnett phase sites, these bowls are common, with multiple examples represented in household assemblages. Additionally, they are frequently decorated. At Parchman, there is only one example of a medium coarse ware simple bowl and two medium fine ware simple bowls. One of the fine ware bowls is Walls Engraved *var. Hull*, the only decorated simple bowl in the sample. Their rarity of bowls of this size and shape and their typically plain appearance may suggest a less important role than those of the Barnett phase. On the other hand, there are very few excavated contexts at Parchman that could be characterized as household assemblages.

One example of a large (~50 cm in diameter) simple coarse ware bowl was identified in the sample. As with the smaller sizes, the wide orifice would facilitate manipulation and scooping of the vessel contents, however, the large size and capacity would prevent moving the vessel when full. This bowl could have been used to serve large amounts of prepared food or for various steps in the preparation of certain foods. Soaking, for instance, is a preliminary step in the preparation of maize, which would have been processed in large quantities. Parching is another possibility—see discussion below regarding a possible parching function for wide shallow bowls.

*Wide Shallow Bowls.* Coarse ware wide shallow bowls in the sample include small (n = 1), medium (n = 3), and large (n = 5) sizes. Seven coarse ware wide shallow bowls were of

indeterminate size, while two wide shallow bowls of indeterminate size were manufactured on fine (Bell Plain) ware. Five coarse and one fine wide shallow bowl have a gently undulating rounded rim. Unlike the coarse shell-tempered flaring rim bowls, coarse wide shallow bowls typically have thick (“chunky”) vessel walls and undecorated rims (Figure 3.15). According to Braun (1983:118), the thicker the vessel wall, the lower its thermal conductivity and resistance to thermal shock, but the greater its flexural strength or breakage load. Although the thick vessel walls might argue against cooking as a primary function, two wide shallow bowls show direct evidence of use over fire. One of the medium-sized bowls has exterior sooting, while one of the large examples has sooting on the interior.

This class of vessels may have been used in the manner of simple coarse ware bowls, that is, for manipulating, serving, and sometimes heating or reheating small to large amounts of food, depending on the size of the vessel used. However, due to their compromised thermal properties, they were probably not used for cooking at high temperatures such as those required for boiling foods like maize or beans for long periods of time. One possibility is that these bowls,



Figure 3.15. Large Mississippi Plain wide shallow bowl from Parchman Place (22CO511).

particularly the larger ones, may have been used for parching, a common way of preparing large quantities of maize, nuts, and other foods for storage and consumption (Hally 1986:269).

Parching maize, for instance, requires cooking dried kernels slowly at low temperatures, a process that may have been well suited to thick-walled wide shallow bowls.

Given their similar mechanical performance characteristics, the uses of small coarse ware wide shallow bowls are probably similar to that of small simple bowls. That is, they were probably multi-purpose bowls used for mixing and serving small amounts of solid or viscous food. Like small simple bowls, they are uncommon in the Parchman sample, the only example was recovered from the A-B swale, presumably from a domestic context.

Medium coarse ware wide shallow bowls range in size from 32-38 cm in orifice diameter. Excepting their rather thick vessel walls, they have similar mechanical performance characteristics to medium-sized simple bowls from Parchman and to Hally's (1986:289) large rounded bowls from north Georgia. One has sooting on the exterior. These bowls were likely used for food preparation such as mixing of prepared ingredients and for serving of solid and semi-solid foods. Exterior sooting on one example suggests that they were also sometimes used for cooking or heating food or perhaps for parching maize or nuts. Another possibility is that these bowls could be used upside down in the manner of an oven and that the sooting could result from coals being heaped on the outside (Hally 1986:269). Other food preparation activities such as soaking of maize or leaching of tannins from acorns could have been performed in wide shallow bowls. Medium coarse ware wide shallow bowls are uncommon in the Parchman sample. Two examples were recovered from non-mound contexts, one from the A-B swale and one from Neighborhood 1. A third was associated with an intermediate construction stage of Mound E.

*Large Coarse Wide Shallow Bowls.* Five of the nine coarse wide shallow bowls (or 56%) are “large,” with rim diameters of approximately 50 cm. This suggests a special function for these large coarse vessels that has to do with the processing or preparation of large amounts of food or for serving large groups of people. Interior sooting on one of the examples could indicate that the bowl was used to carry fire, or perhaps more likely, it may have been used in an upside down position over a fire to trap heat, in effect acting as a type of oven. Hally (1986:269), citing Swanton (1946:356), tells us that ovens might consist of a hearth surface with a pottery vessel cover (“deep dish”) over which coals were heaped. As discussed above, the size, shape and mechanical performance characteristics of these large wide shallow bowls may have made them particularly suitable for parching large quantities of foods such as maize for storage. Interestingly, they are considerably more prevalent in early contexts at Parchman, with four of five examples recovered from 14<sup>th</sup> century contexts. The fifth is of unknown date. Three of these large bowls are from the initial construction stages of Mounds A and E; the other two are from early contexts in Neighborhood 1 and the A-B swale.

Two examples of fine ware wide shallow bowls were identified in the Parchman sample, but neither rim was large enough to determine orifice diameter. Both examples were executed on Bell Plain *var. Bell* paste and one has a gently undulating rounded rim. These bowls were likely used for serving and display of food. Without knowing the size it is difficult to say more.

*Flaring Rim Bowls.* Flaring rim bowls (Figures 3.10 e., f., g., h.; 3.13; 3.14) occur on coarse (n = 20), fine (n = 21), and unidentified (n = 8) wares (many unidentified examples were so typed because their appearance was intermediate between Mississippi Plain and Bell Plain in terms of paste and temper). Coarse shell tempered flaring rim bowls were manufactured in small (1 example) and medium (3 examples) sizes. Sixteen coarse flaring rim bowls could not be

measured. They are manufactured on Mississippi Plain (n = 18) and Old Town Red *var. Old Town* (n = 2) wares. Six examples have gently undulating rounded rims, while three have large rounded notches taken out of the rim. One of the notched bowls also has linear incisions on the outflaring rim portion. The small flaring rim bowl has sooting on the exterior surface where the rim starts to flare, indicating direct use over a heat source, either for cooking, reheating, or keeping food warm. One of the medium-sized coarse flaring rim bowls exhibits sooting or blackening on the vessel interior. Coarse ware flaring rim bowls are common in 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century mound and neighborhood contexts.

There are 21 examples of fine ware flaring rim bowls in the sample, four of which had rim portions large enough to estimate orifice diameter. One falls into the “small” category, while three fall into the “medium” category. Many of the fine ware flaring rim bowls are decorated—type varieties include Walls Engraved *var. Hull* (n = 5) and Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam* (n = 1) in addition to Bell Plain *var. Bell* (n = 15). Burnishing, gently undulating rounded rims, large rounded notching on the rim, incising and notching on the rims are common. One example has a stepped, cutaway design on the interior of the bowl, an exceedingly uncommon decorative form. They were recovered from 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century mound and neighborhood contexts but are more common during the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Hally’s category of Flaring Rim Bowls seem to be smaller (10-27 cm orifice diameter) than the ones at Parchman (20-23 for small and 28-36 for medium). Additionally, they are much deeper, perhaps sharing some jar-like characteristics with the deep flaring rim bowls found at Chucalissa (Childress 1992:37). The Parchman flaring rim bowls, on the other hand, are shallow in proportion with rims that flare out to a greater or lesser extent. On vessels that are large enough to tell, the bases of flaring rim bowls appear to be flattened. Their mechanical

performance characteristics most closely resemble those of wide shallow bowls, though flattened bases would make them even more stable and the contents less likely to spill while the vessels is stationary. Additionally, flaring rim bowls are frequently decorated on the outflaring portion of the rim, unlike wide shallow bowls, which are largely undecorated (though many have scalloped rims). All of these characteristics as well as their ubiquity (they are found throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries in both mound and neighborhood contexts at Parchman) suggest that the flaring rim bowl was commonly used as a serving bowl.

Sooting on two coarse ware examples suggests that some of these bowls were also occasionally used for cooking or heating food or for carrying fire. A small coarse ware wide shallow bowl was sooted on the exterior where the rim started to flare, indicating its use over direct heat. A medium coarse wide shallow bowl had interior sooting. Perhaps this vessel was used to carry fire, coals, or ashes from one location to another. This particular example was recovered nearly whole from an early mound surface of Mound E and although it was manufactured on a coarse Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* paste, it is both thinner and more finely made than is typical for the type. Additionally, the rim is decorated with both rounded notches and linear incisions. The relative care taken in manufacturing and decorating this bowl as well as its depositional context might lend support to the above interpretation of its use in transporting fire. It could also simply be a bowl primarily meant for serving that was repurposed in this way.

*Carinated and Restricted Bowls.* Five examples of carinated bowls (Figure 3.10 k., l., m.) were identified in the sample, four of which were manufactured on fine shell-tempered ware, including Bell Plain *var. Bell* and Walls Engraved *var. Hull* (the fifth was on a unidentified plain paste). The Walls Engraved *var. Hull* example had an orifice diameter of 15 cm and its rim was



decorated with a series of small, circular punctations. The unidentified example had an orifice diameter of 14 cm; both fall into the “small” bowl category. Carinated bowls tend to have a slightly restricted opening and to be rather “squat,” making them both stable and good at containing contents.

Three restricted bowls (Figure 3.10 n.) were identified in the sample, including two fine ware examples—one each of Bell Plain *var. Bell* and L’Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified*—and one unidentified plain example. The Bell example has a rim decorated with linear incisions perpendicular to the rim. All three fall into the “small” bowl category, with orifice diameters of 13 cm, 13 cm, and 12 cm respectively. Like carinated bowls, restricted bowls would be stable and have good containment security for contents.

Carinated and restricted bowls would probably have been used in similar ways, as they have similar performance characteristics. Their small size and restricted orifices preclude them from use as food preparation vessels, and their fine ware eliminates cooking. They may have been used as serving dishes for small amounts of food or for things like condiments or dips. Their stability and restricted orifice would provide good containment security. This and the fact that many are finely made and frequently decorated suggest that their contents may have been particularly rare, difficult to procure, or valuable. They would also be suitable for storing small amounts of dried goods that might easily blow away. Carinated and restricted bowls are quite rare at Parchman, occurring primarily in early contexts.

### *Bottle Forms*

Fifty-eight vessels were identified as bottles in the Parchman ceramic sample (Figure 3.16). Bottles are typically defined as having openings that are substantially more narrow than

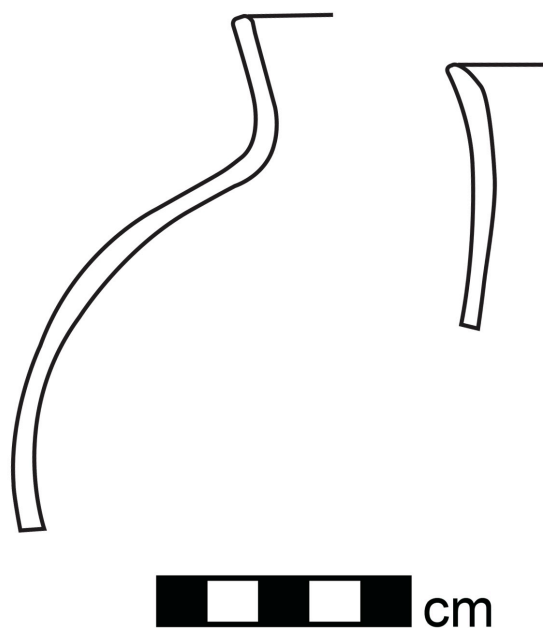


Figure 3.16. Profile drawings of bottles from Parchman Place (22CO511); both are standard neck bottles.

the main body of the vessels as well as having more or less vertical neck portions. According to Shepard (1956:28), “necked” vessels prevent liquids from slopping and facilitate pouring.

However, their performance characteristics would also be useful for containing small-grained things (such as seeds) that act like liquids when poured. Presumably, the main factors in determining function and use for bottles are ware and orifice size. Decorative attributes may also give clues about the nature of social gatherings where the bottles were used. Though rim form does not seem to be of primary concern in determining function for bottles (or any other vessel class, for that matter), these attributes are also summarized below.

*Coarse and Fine Ware Bottles.* Vessels identified as bottles in the Parchman sample include both coarse ware and fine ware varieties. Coarse shell-tempered varieties include Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry* (n = 11) and *unspecified* (n = 1), and Old Town Red *var.*

*Old Town* (n = 2). Fine shell-tempered varieties include Bell Plain *var. Bell* (n = 18), Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam* (n = 12), Leland Incised *var. unspecified* (n = 1), Avenue Polychrome *var. Avenue* (n = 1), Carson Red on Buff *var. Carson* (n = 1), Nodena Red and White *var. Nodena* (n = 1). One Bell Plain *var. Bell* bottle base flange has regular circular perforations. Though the two examples in the sample do not refit, their depositional context strongly suggests they are from the same bottle). Nine bottles were classified as unidentified plain, and one was associated with Larto Red *var. Larto*, a clay-tempered Baytown paste.

*Sizes of Bottle Necks.* In reality, the relative proportions of neck to body vary widely among vessels classified as bottles. For this reason, orifice diameter is not a good predictor of bottle size or volume. However, as the width of bottle necks may be indicative of particular vessel performance characteristics such as containment security, I thought it useful to determine whether size classes existed among the sample of Parchman bottle necks. Thirty-eight bottle rims were sufficiently large to measure orifice diameter. A frequency histogram of bottle orifice diameters (Figure 3.17) indicates that three potential classes of bottles exist (see also Table 3.3). Again, these are not size or volume classes, but simply identify classes based on the width of bottle necks. Most bottles (n = 30) have necks that range from 6-11 cm in diameter. I call these “standard neck bottles.” There are six “narrow neck bottles,” with orifice diameters ranging from 3-5 cm. Two examples of “wide neck bottles” exist in the sample, with orifice diameters of 13 and 15 cm.

*Secondary Shape Features: Rim Form.* Simple rounded rims (n = 34) far outweigh any other form of rim treatment for bottles and are common on both fine ware and coarse ware bottles. Simple flattened (n = 6) and simple intermediate (n = 4) are also present. The clay tempered Larto Red *var. Larto* bottle has a thinned rim. Thirteen bottles had rims that were

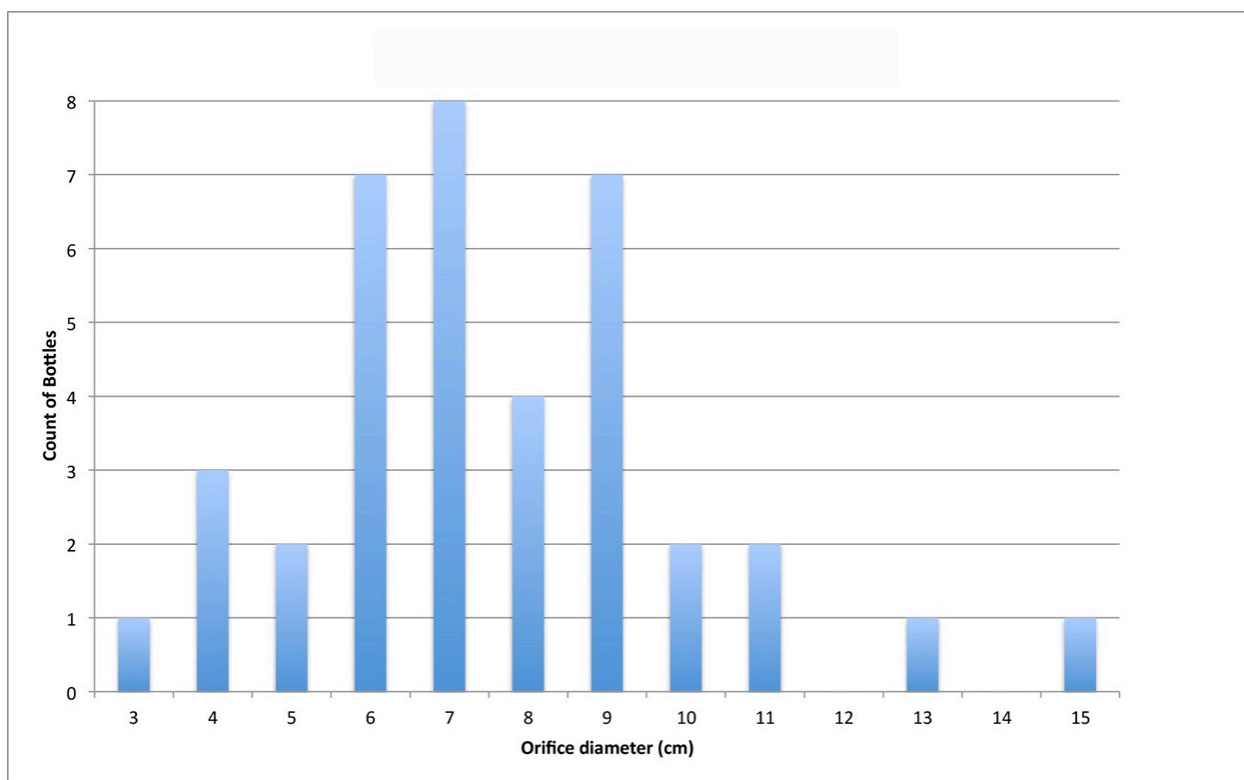


Figure 3.17. Frequency histogram of bottle orifices, indicating three possible bottle forms, including narrow neck (3-5 cm), standard neck (6-11 cm), and wide neck (13-15 cm).

Table 3.3. Types, varieties, and shape for ceramic bottles identified at Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Bottles                                      | Narrow Neck | Standard Neck | Wide Neck | Indet. or Not |              |
|--|-------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|
|  |             |               |           | Recorded      | Bottle Total |
| Mississippi Plain <i>var. Neeley's Ferry</i> | –           | 8             | –         | 3             | 11           |
| Mississippi Plain <i>var. unspecified</i>    | –           | –             | –         | 1             | 1            |
| Leland Incised <i>var. unspecified</i>       | –           | –             | –         | 1             | 1            |
| Old Town Red <i>var. Old Town</i>            | 1           | –             | –         | 1             | 2            |
| Bell Plain <i>var. Bell</i>                  | 1           | 9             | 2         | 7             | 19           |
| Avenue Polychrome <i>var. Avenue</i>         | –           | –             | –         | 1             | 1            |
| Carson Red on Buff <i>var. Carson</i>        | –           | –             | –         | 1             | 1            |
| Nodena Red and White <i>var. Nodena</i>      | –           | –             | –         | 1             | 1            |
| Old Town Red <i>var. Beaverdam</i>           | 1           | 7             | –         | 4             | 12           |
| Larto Red <i>var. Larto</i>                  | –           | –             | –         | 1             | 1            |
| Unidentified Plain <i>var. unspecified</i>   | 3           | 6             | –         | –             | 9            |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                           | <b>6</b>    | <b>30</b>     | <b>2</b>  | <b>21</b>     | <b>59</b>    |

indeterminate or not recorded.

*Decorative Embellishment.* As is evident by the associated varieties, bottles are commonly decorated by slipping or painting (Figure 3.18). Slipping or painting was used to decorate clay-tempered, coarse shell-tempered, and fine-shell-tempered bottles at Parchman: 18 of 58 bottles (or 31%) were painted with red; red and white; or red, black and white pigments. Additionally, three bottles are burnished (one standard neck bottle of indeterminate ware, and two fine ware bottles whose neck dimensions could not be measured). The following sections describe mechanical performance characteristics and hypothesized uses for standard, narrow neck, and wide neck bottles.

#### *Bottle Classes and Hypothesized Use*

*Standard Neck Bottles.* Standard neck bottles come in coarse ware and fine ware varieties, including Mississippi Plain var. *Neeley's Ferry* (n = 8), Bell Plain var. *Bell* (n = 9), and Old Town Red var. *Beaverdam* (n = 7). The single clay-tempered bottle in the assemblage also falls within this class, as do six bottles of unidentified plain paste (one of which is burnished). As



Figure 3.18. Examples of painted bottles from Parchman Place (22CO511).

with the entire bottle assemblage, most rims are simple rounded (n = 24), though simple flattened and simple intermediate rims are also present. The clay-tempered bottle has a thinned rim. The only nearly whole bottle in the assemblage is an unidentified plain standard neck bottle with a simple rounded rim (Figure 3.19). It has a slightly outflaring rim, a constricted neck and a globular body. The orifice diameter is 6 cm, while the widest part of the bottle (at the shoulder) is 15 cm in diameter. Coarse ware standard neck bottles were recovered from 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century mound and neighborhood contexts, though they were more common in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Fine ware standard neck bottles are present only in 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts, though a few examples are from contexts that could not be reliably dated. They occur in mound and neighborhood deposits.

The presence of a neck provides high containment security and severely limits access to vessel contents. While bottle contents could have been mixed by swirling or shaking, they could



Figure 3.19. Standard neck bottle from Parchman Place (22CO511).

only be removed by pouring. Loss of contents through evaporation or spilling would be minimal. Coarse ware vessels could plausibly have been used to heat liquid contents, though direct evidence of this is lacking. Not knowing anything about the capacity of bottles from Parchman, I nonetheless hypothesize that they were used to serve, store and transport various quantities of liquids or small-grained materials (Hally 1986:290). Given the relatively small size of the one nearly complete standard neck bottle from Parchman, I suspect that the volume of materials contained within standard neck bottles was also relatively low.

*Narrow Neck Bottles.* Six bottles fall into the narrow-neck category, including Bell Plain *var. Bell* (n = 1), Old Town Red *vars. Beaverdam* (n = 1) and *Old Town* (n = 1), and unidentified plain (n = 3). Again, most rim forms are simple rounded. Additionally, a number of narrow neck bottles have rim portions that flare slightly. Narrow neck bottles would have had long, slender necks, rather graceful ovular or globular bodies, and flattened or rounded bases. These bottles, often carefully decorated with painted designs, are not uncommon in the Northern Yazoo, though they are more common in eastern Arkansas. None of the Parchman narrow neck bottles are burnished, though of course, the Old Town Red bottles are red-slipped. Though few in number they occur in 14<sup>th</sup> (A-B Swale) and 15<sup>th</sup> century (Mound E) contexts.

Narrow neck bottles would have very high containment security and were probably used to store and serve small quantities of liquids. Their rarity and the care taken in their manufacture and decoration suggests they would have been used in special, possibly ritual or elite contexts to contain liquids that were rare or valuable. Perhaps surprisingly, they are not limited to mound contexts, but also occur in a neighborhood context in the A-B swale.

*Wide Neck Bottles.* Two wide neck bottles were identified in the sample with orifice diameters of 13 cm and 15 cm. Both are Bell Plain *var. Bell* bottles with simple rounded rims.

Neither exhibits burnishing. Both examples are from 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts in Mound E.

Unfortunately, very little about their body dimensions can be determined from the rims alone.

While retaining much of their ability to contain contents securely, the wider orifices of these bottles may have increased access to the materials held within. Like standard neck bottles, wide neck bottles could have contained liquids or other pourable substances such as seeds or dried beans. The wide orifice might allow contents to be scooped out as well as poured.

Nineteen additional vessels were identified as bottles, though their rim portions were insufficient to obtain a measurement of orifice diameter. Eighteen of these were on fine shell-tempered wares, including Bell Plain *var. Bell* (n = 3), Avenue Polychrome *var. Avenue* (n = 1), Carson Red on Buff (n = 1), Leland Incised *var. unspecified* (n = 1), Nodena Red and White (n = 1), and Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam* (n = 4) varieties. One courseware bottle of indeterminate orifice diameter was identified, associated with Old Town Red *var. Old Town*.

### **Summary of Ceramic Vessel Assemblage**

The functional vessel analysis above resulted in the identification of eight jar categories, 15 bowl categories, and five bottle categories, based primarily on combinations of vessel shape, size, and ware. A summary of these vessel classes along with their hypothesized use can be found in Table 3.4. Within the total assemblage we find two sizes of general purpose cooking jars (small and medium coarse ware jars) made in two shapes (simple and standard). We also have two (large and very large) coarse ware jars sometimes used for cooking but primarily used for storage (also in both shapes). We also find a very small coarse ware jar that does not seem to have been used over fire but technically could have been. Finally, very small-, small-, and



medium-sized fine ware jars also were made in small numbers. These were not used for cooking but may have held ingredients used for cooking or have been used to serve small to medium portions of foods or dishes once cooked. The smaller ones may have held condiments such as oil or salt water for dipping.

Like jars, bowls in the Parchman sample are made in multiple shapes and sizes that serve functionally different purposes. Simple and wide shallow bowls were made in sizes ranging from very small to large and seem to have been utilitarian food preparation and serving bowls. Both bowl types were manufactured on coarse and fine wares, but simple bowls are typically smaller and more often found on fine wares, whereas wide shallow bowls are more often made of coarse wares and are frequently quite large. Additionally, wide shallow bowls have thicker walls than simple bowls and the larger sizes were at least occasionally used for cooking or heating. I have suggested that parching may have been an important function for large wide shallow bowls.

Flaring rim bowls were the standard food-serving vessel used at Parchman. Exterior sooting on one small bowl suggests they were also occasionally used for cooking or heating small amounts of food. Though they are the most common bowl form at the site, they occur in just two sizes (small and medium). Coarse and fine ware versions were identified, but many coarse ware examples were more finely made than typical coarse ware varieties. A number of flaring rim bowls were intermediate between coarse and fine shell-tempered paste and thus were classified as unidentified plain. Unlike simple and wide shallow bowls, flaring rim bowls are frequently decorated, suggesting they were used in contexts where visibility was important. Their finer ware and greater tendency toward decoration suggest a less strictly utilitarian role than that of simple and wide shallow bowls. Flaring rim bowls are common across the site in 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts and tend to become more finely made as time passes. One medium flaring rim

bowl may have been used to transport fire as its interior is sooted. Restricted and carinated bowls were potentially used to serve small amounts of rare or special foods (or other substances), but they did not contribute in a general way to the food practices of the Parchman population. Rather, they seem to be more likely used for ritual purposes or to express some kind of identity or perhaps a kinship or economic relationship with other Mississippian groups to the south.

Bottles are fairly well represented in the assemblage, though not nearly as common as jars or bowls. They occur in low to moderate numbers in mound and neighborhood contexts throughout the occupation of Parchman, becoming both more numerous and more finely made in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Bottles of all descriptions were probably used to hold small amounts of liquids or granular substances. Finely made and decorated specimens were likely used for specialized purposes.

While the functional vessel types described above and summarized in Table 3.4 are indicative of the Parchman ceramic assemblage as a whole, they occur with varying frequency and in different combinations throughout the site. Table 3.5 illustrates chronological trends. Vessel classes that occur exclusively in 14<sup>th</sup> century (Parchman I) contexts include large coarse wide shallow bowls. Interestingly, one example of this occurs in every context that has been dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, so they are ubiquitous in Parchman I contexts even though they are also “rare.” Small restricted bowls also occur exclusively in Parchman I contexts, and three of four carinated bowls from excavated contexts also date to Parchman I. There is also one example of a very small coarse simple jar that occurs in a Parchman I deposit. Despite small sample sizes, I believe these patterns are meaningful for reasons I discuss below.

There are also some interesting trends in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Parchman II) functional vessel classes. Fine ware jars of various sizes (very small, small, and medium) occur exclusively in

Table 3.4. Functional vessel categories for vessels from Parchman Place (22CO511) with hypothesized primary and secondary use.

| Vessel Type                          | Orifice diameter | Number identified | Primary use                                 | Secondary use   |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| <b>Jars</b>                          |                  |                   |   |   |
| Very small coarse ware jar           | 6-9 cm           | 4                 | Serving rare, valuable, or perishable foods | Storage of rare, valuable, or perishable foods; Storage/serving of non-food items |
| Very small fine ware jar             | 6-9 cm           | 1                 | Serving rare, valuable, or perishable foods | Storage of rare, valuable, or perishable foods; Storage/serving of non-food items |
| Small coarse ware jar                | 10-18 cm         | 25                | Cooking/boiling                             | Serving   |
| Small fine ware jar                  | 10-18 cm         | 2                 | Serving                                     | Short term storage  |
| Medium coarse ware jar               | 20-28 cm         | 23                | Cooking/boiling                             | Serving   |
| Medium fine ware jar                 | 20-28 cm         | 1                 | Serving                                     | Short term storage  |
| Large coarse ware jar                | 30-40 cm         | 26                | Storage                                     | Cooking/boiling   |
| Very large coarse ware jar           | 45-50+ cm        | 10                | Storage                                     |   |
| <b>Bowls</b>                         |                  |                   |   |   |
| Very small simple pinch bowl         | 2-6 cm           | 5                 | Serving rare, valuable, or perishable foods |   |
| Small coarse ware simple bowl        | 10-23 cm         | 5                 | Serving                                     | Food preparation (mixing, etc.); cooking/heating                                  |
| Small fine ware simple bowl          | 10-23 cm         | 7                 | Serving                                     | Food preparation (mixing, etc.)   |
| Medium coarse ware simple bowl       | 25-38 cm         | 1                 | Serving                                     | Food preparation (mixing, etc.); cooking/heating                                  |
| Medium fine ware simple bowl         | 25-38 cm         | 2                 | Serving                                     | Food preparation (mixing, etc.)   |
| Large coarse ware simple bowl        | ~50 cm           | 1                 | Serving                                     | Food preparation (mixing, etc.); cooking/heating                                  |
| Small coarse ware wide shallow bowl  | 10-23 cm         | 1                 | Serving                                     | Food preparation (mixing, etc.); cooking/heating                                  |
| Medium coarse ware wide shallow bowl | 25-28 cm         | 3                 | Serving                                     | Food preparation (mixing, etc.); cooking/heating                                  |
| Large coarse ware wide shallow bowl  | ~50 cm           | 5                 | Parching                                    | Serving; food preparation (mixing, etc.)  |
| Small coarse ware flaring rim bowl   | 10-23 cm         | 1                 | Serving                                     | Heating   |
| Small fine ware flaring rim bowl     | 10-23 cm         | 1                 | Serving                                     |   |
| Medium coarse ware flaring rim bowl  | 25-28 cm         | 3                 | Serving                                     | Heating   |
| Medium fine ware flaring rim bowl    | 25-28 cm         | 3                 | Serving                                     |   |
| Small fine ware carinated bowl       | 10-23 cm         | 2                 | Serving rare, valuable, or perishable foods | Storage of rare, valuable, or perishable foods; Storage/serving of non-food items |
| Small fine ware restricted bowl      | 10-23 cm         | 3                 | Serving rare, valuable, or perishable foods | Storage of rare, valuable, or perishable foods; Storage/serving of non-food items |
| <b>Bottles</b>                       |                  |                   |   |   |
| Coarse ware narrow neck bottle       | 3-5 cm           | 1                 | Serving liquids                             |   |
| Fine ware narrow neck bottle         | 3-5 cm           | 2                 | Serving liquids                             |   |
| Coarse ware standard neck bottle     | 6-11 cm          | 8                 | Serving liquids                             | Storage of liquids and particles (e.g. seeds)                                     |
| Fine ware standard neck bottle       | 6-11 cm          | 16                | Serving liquids                             | Storage of liquids and particles (e.g. seeds)                                     |
| Fine ware wide neck bottle           | 13-16            | 2                 | Serving liquids                             | Storage of liquids and particles (e.g. seeds)                                     |

Table 3.5. Functional vessel types from 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century deposits at Parchman Place.

| 14th Century                        | 14th/15th Century                   | 15th Century                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| small fine ware restricted bowl     | very small coarse ware jar          | very small fine ware jar             |
| large coarse ware wide shallow bowl | small coarse ware jar               | small fine ware jar                  |
|                                     | medium coarse ware jar              | medium fine ware jar                 |
|                                     | large coarse ware jar               | small fine ware flaring rim bowl     |
|                                     | very large coarse ware jar          | small coarse ware flaring rim bowl   |
|                                     | very small simple bowl              | medium coarse ware wide shallow bowl |
|                                     | small carinated bowl                | standard neck fine ware bottle       |
|                                     | small fine ware simple bowl         | wide neck fine ware bottle           |
|                                     | small coarse ware simple bowl       |                                      |
|                                     | medium fine ware simple bowl        |                                      |
|                                     | medium coarse ware flaring rim bowl |                                      |
|                                     | medium fine flaring rim bowl        |                                      |
|                                     | standard neck coarse ware bottle    |                                      |
|                                     | narrow neck bottle                  |                                      |

Parchman II contexts (n = 4 total). One small carinated bowl is also associated with an early 15<sup>th</sup> century context from Mound E. Small flaring rim bowls (one fine and one coarse) occur during Parchman II but not before. Finally, fine ware bottles, including standard neck (n = 9) and wide neck (n = 2) occur only in Parchman II contexts, following the broader trend of increasing fine ware examples of other vessel types formerly made of coarse wares (e.g. jars).

Occurring in both Parchman I and Parchman II are coarse jars of all sizes from very small to very large. Small simple bowls (fine and coarse) and medium simple bowls (fine) are present throughout both sub-phases, as are medium fine and coarse flaring rim bowls. Coarse standard neck bottles are present in both sub-phases, as are narrow neck bottles (one each of coarse, fine, and indeterminate ware).

### Characterizing Functional Vessel Assemblages

To determine whether there were functionally distinct ceramic sub-assemblages at Parchman, I conducted a correspondence analysis using excavation contexts as row variables and functional

vessel classes as column variables. The resulting biplot is presented in Figure 3.20; statistical output can be found in Table 3.6 and abbreviations used in the analysis are summarized in Table 3.7. As the method of correspondence analysis was described in the preceding chapter, only the results of this analysis will be discussed here. Dimension 1, which explains 32.3% of the variation in the table, essentially separates bowls from jars, with various types of bowls plotting to the right of the graph (Figure 3.21). Contexts that lack high relative proportions of bowls plot with cooking and storage jars in a single cluster to the left, near the origin of graph. In particular, the results are influenced by large coarse ware simple and wide shallow bowls, which were grouped in the analysis (and

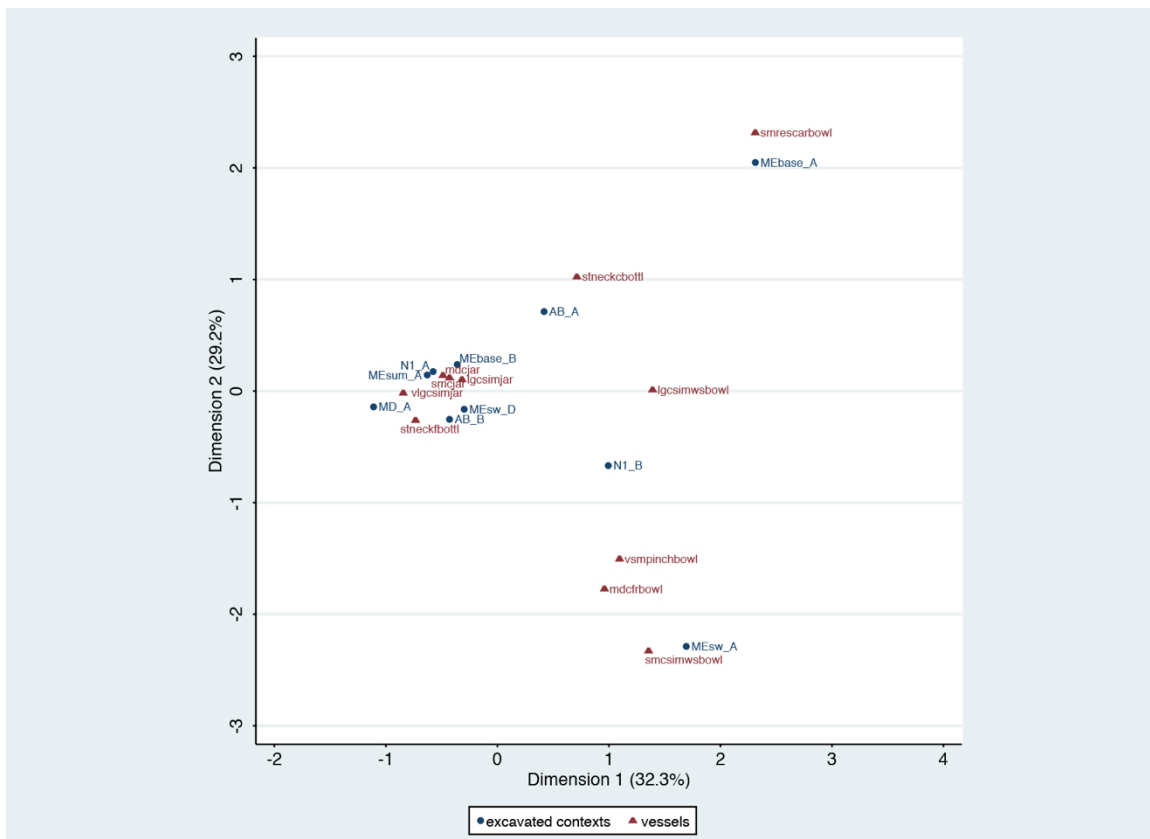


Figure 3.20. Biplot showing correspondence among ceramic functional vessel types and excavated contexts at Parchman Place (22CO511). A key to abbreviations used here can be found in Table 3.7.

Table 3.6. Statistical output from STATA for functional vessel correspondence analysis.

```
Correspondence analysis
Number of obs      =      73
Pearson chi2(90)   =    119.58
Prob > chi2        =    0.0202
Total inertia      =    1.6381
Number of dim.     =      2
Expl. inertia (%)  =    61.51

10 active rows
11 active columns
```

| Dimension | singular<br>value | principal<br>inertia | chi2   | percent | cumul<br>percent |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------------|--------|---------|------------------|
| dim 1     | .7272423          | .5288814             | 38.61  | 32.29   | 32.29            |
| dim 2     | .691928           | .4787643             | 34.95  | 29.23   | 61.51            |
| dim 3     | .5116956          | .2618324             | 19.11  | 15.98   | 77.50            |
| dim 4     | .4029788          | .1623919             | 11.85  | 9.91    | 87.41            |
| dim 5     | .3286258          | .1079949             | 7.88   | 6.59    | 94.00            |
| dim 6     | .2436548          | .0593677             | 4.33   | 3.62    | 97.62            |
| dim 7     | .1476467          | .0217995             | 1.59   | 1.33    | 98.96            |
| dim 8     | .1022731          | .0104598             | 0.76   | 0.64    | 99.59            |
| dim 9     | .0815441          | .0066494             | 0.49   | 0.41    | 100.00           |
| total     |                   | 1.638141             | 119.58 | 100     |                  |

Statistics for row and column categories in symmetric normalization

| Categories     | overall |         |        | dimension_1 |        |         | dimension_2 |        |         |
|----------------|---------|---------|--------|-------------|--------|---------|-------------|--------|---------|
|                | mass    | quality | %inert | coord       | sqcorr | contrib | coord       | sqcorr | contrib |
| <b>rows</b>    |         |         |        |             |        |         |             |        |         |
| AB A           | 0.110   | 0.759   | 0.042  | 0.418       | 0.202  | 0.026   | 0.712       | 0.557  | 0.080   |
| AB B           | 0.137   | 0.407   | 0.037  | -0.429      | 0.305  | 0.035   | -0.254      | 0.102  | 0.013   |
| MEbase A       | 0.055   | 0.952   | 0.239  | 2.313       | 0.545  | 0.403   | 2.048       | 0.407  | 0.332   |
| MEbase B       | 0.178   | 0.264   | 0.055  | -0.360      | 0.187  | 0.032   | 0.238       | 0.078  | 0.015   |
| MD A           | 0.041   | 0.161   | 0.142  | -1.110      | 0.158  | 0.070   | -0.142      | 0.002  | 0.001   |
| MEsum A        | 0.096   | 0.467   | 0.038  | -0.629      | 0.445  | 0.052   | 0.144       | 0.022  | 0.003   |
| MEsw A         | 0.068   | 0.966   | 0.247  | 1.694       | 0.353  | 0.270   | -2.289      | 0.613  | 0.519   |
| MEsw D         | 0.205   | 0.237   | 0.044  | -0.298      | 0.184  | 0.025   | -0.163      | 0.053  | 0.008   |
| N1 A           | 0.068   | 0.184   | 0.060  | -0.576      | 0.169  | 0.031   | 0.175       | 0.015  | 0.003   |
| N1 B           | 0.041   | 0.266   | 0.097  | 0.994       | 0.186  | 0.056   | -0.669      | 0.080  | 0.027   |
| <b>columns</b> |         |         |        |             |        |         |             |        |         |
| smcjar         | 0.178   | 0.196   | 0.080  | -0.429      | 0.182  | 0.045   | 0.120       | 0.014  | 0.004   |
| mdcjar         | 0.192   | 0.442   | 0.049  | -0.488      | 0.410  | 0.063   | 0.141       | 0.033  | 0.006   |
| lgcsimjar      | 0.205   | 0.268   | 0.038  | -0.317      | 0.243  | 0.028   | 0.104       | 0.025  | 0.003   |
| vlgsimjar      | 0.096   | 0.272   | 0.112  | -0.844      | 0.272  | 0.094   | -0.017      | 0.000  | 0.000   |
| vsm pinchbowl  | 0.041   | 0.630   | 0.097  | 1.096       | 0.226  | 0.068   | -1.503      | 0.404  | 0.134   |
| smcsimwsbowl   | 0.041   | 0.807   | 0.158  | 1.356       | 0.212  | 0.104   | -2.327      | 0.595  | 0.322   |
| lgcsimwsbowl   | 0.068   | 0.750   | 0.078  | 1.391       | 0.750  | 0.182   | 0.012       | 0.000  | 0.000   |
| mdcfrbowl      | 0.027   | 0.735   | 0.065  | 0.960       | 0.173  | 0.035   | -1.772      | 0.562  | 0.124   |
| smrescarbowl   | 0.041   | 0.936   | 0.204  | 2.312       | 0.479  | 0.302   | 2.317       | 0.457  | 0.319   |
| stneckfbot~e   | 0.055   | 0.200   | 0.073  | -0.734      | 0.178  | 0.041   | -0.261      | 0.021  | 0.005   |
| stneckcbot~e   | 0.055   | 0.802   | 0.046  | 0.713       | 0.271  | 0.038   | 1.024       | 0.531  | 0.083   |

had a squared correlation value of .750). Other vessel classes that influence the analysis are small restricted and carinated bowls (squared correlation .479), and to a lesser extent, coarse ware standard neck bottles (squared correlation .271). Also plotting to the right of the graph are very

Table 3.7. Abbreviations used in the functional vessel correspondence analysis.

| Abbreviation  | Row and column variables                   |
|---------------|--|
| AB A          | A-B Swale, analysis unit A                 |
| AB B          | A-B Swale, analysis unit B                 |
| MEbase A      | Mound E base, analysis unit A              |
| MEbase B      | Mound E base, analysis unit B              |
| MD A          | Mound D summit, analysis unit A            |
| MEsum A       | Mound E summit, analysis unit A            |
| MEsw A        | Mound E southwest slope, analysis unit A   |
| MEsw D        | Mound E southwest slope, analysis unit D   |
| N1 A          | Neighborhood 1, analysis unit A            |
| N1 B          | Neighborhood 1, analysis unit B            |
| smcjar        | small coarse ware jar                      |
| mdcjar        | medium coarse ware jar                     |
| lgcsimjar     | large coarse ware simple jar               |
| vlgsimjar     | very large coarse ware simple jar          |
| vsm pinchbowl | very small pinch bowl                      |
| smcsimwsbowl  | small coarse ware simple/wide shallow bowl |
| lgcsimwsbowl  | large coarse ware simple/wide shallow bowl |
| mdcfrbowl     | medium coarse ware flaring rim bowl        |
| smrescarbowl  | small restricted/carinated bowl            |
| stneckbottle  | standard neck fine ware bottle             |
| stneckcbottle | standard neck coarse ware bottle           |

small pinch bowls and small coarse ware simple and wide shallow bowls. These last two do not exert much influence in the analysis but nonetheless are plotted accurately as indicated by their high values in overall quality. I argue below that the first dimension distinguishes “jar-dominated assemblages,” which represent the baseline ceramic assemblage at Parchman, from “bowl-dominated assemblages,” which result from non-everyday communal eating events related to the founding of the Parchman community.

The second dimension makes further distinctions among bowl-dominated assemblages based on their association with certain types of bowls, namely small restricted and carinated bowls, plotting in the top right corner, versus small (coarse) simple and wide shallow bowls,

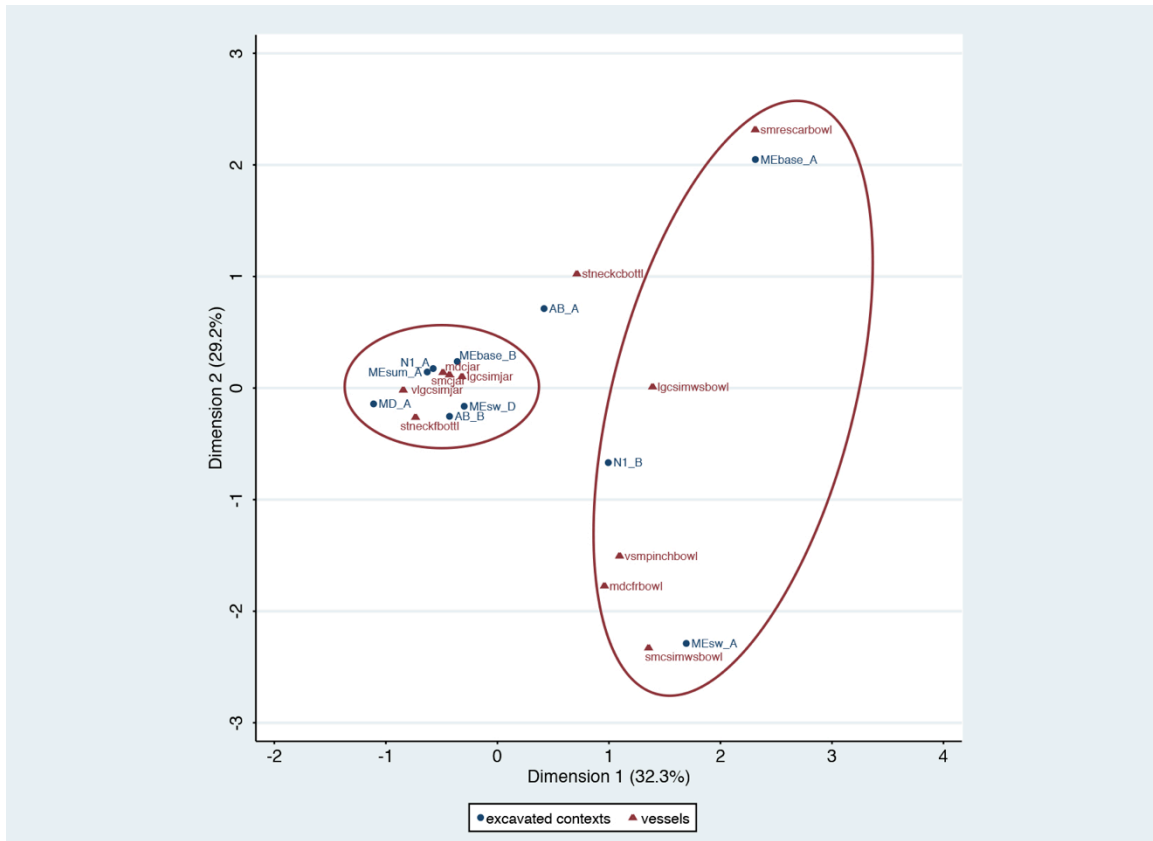


Figure 3.21. Correspondence Analysis biplot highlighting two distinct clusters along the first dimension. Dimension one separates contexts characterized by high proportions of bowls (right cluster) from those that lack high proportions of bowls. A key to abbreviations used here can be found in Table 3.7.

medium (coarse) flaring rim bowls, and very small pinch bowls, which plot toward the lower portion of the graph (Figure 3.22). While I believe bowl-dominated assemblages to be *functionally* similar, I argue that the use of different bowls in serving contexts may indicate a status- or identity-based difference among individuals taking part in communal eating events.

### *Jar Dominated Assemblages*

Jar-dominated assemblages include four mound contexts and two residential contexts that plot in a cluster near the origin of the correspondence analysis biplot (see Table 1.2 for



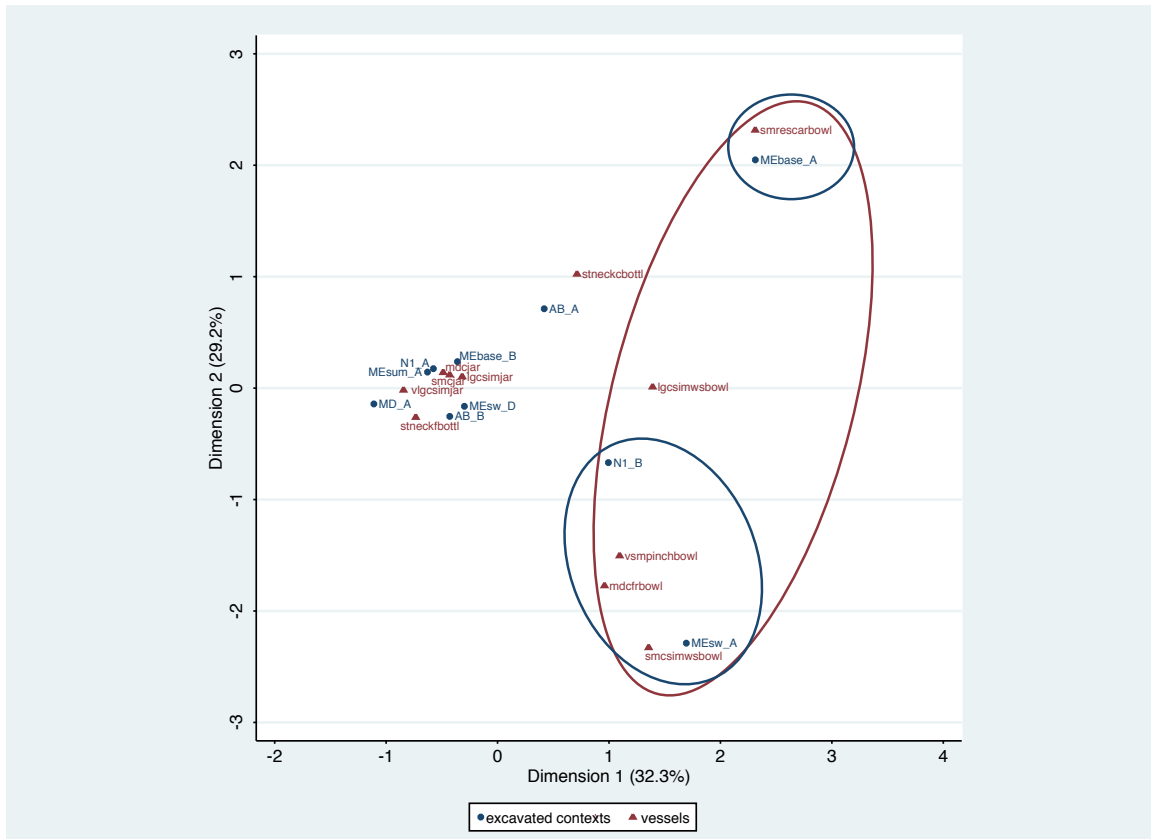


Figure 3.22. Correspondence Analysis biplot highlighting two distinct clusters along the second dimension. Dimension two separates contexts based on differences among bowls, with small carinated and restricted bowls plotting toward the top of the graph and very small pinch bowls plotting toward the bottom. A key to abbreviations used here can be found in Table 3.7

descriptions of the analysis units used in the correspondence analysis). Generally speaking, jar-dominated assemblages differ from bowl-dominated assemblages in relative frequencies of vessels primarily used for cooking, serving, and storage (Tables 3.8 and 3.9; see Table 3.4 for a summary of vessel types associated with these primary functions). Within jar-dominated assemblages, cooking vessels account for just over 60% of the total, serving vessels for roughly 30%, and storage vessels for nearly 10% (Table 3.8). A third residential context, designated AB\_A on the correspondence analysis biplot, also follows this general pattern, though it also shares some characteristics with bowl-dominated assemblages and has therefore been designated “intermediate” (Table 3.10).

Table 3.8. Counts and frequencies of ceramic cooking, serving, and storage vessels for jar-dominated assemblages from Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Jar-dominated assemblages | MdEbase_B        | N1_A             | MEsum_A     | MD_A            | MEsw_D           | AB_B             | Total              |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Cooking                   | 45 (58.4%)       | 10 (71.4%)       | 19 (67.9%)  | 3 (33.3%)       | 53 (62.4%)       | 14 (60.9%)       | <b>144 (61.1%)</b> |
| Serving                   | 27 (35.1%)       | 3 (21.4%)        | 5 (17.9%)   | 4 (44.4%)       | 28 (32.9%)       | 5 (21.7%)        | <b>72 (30.5%)</b>  |
| Storage                   | 5 (6.5%)         | 1 (7.1%)         | 4 (14.3%)   | 2 (22.2%)       | 4 (4.7%)         | 4 (17.4%)        | <b>20 (8.5%)</b>   |
|                           | <b>77 (100%)</b> | <b>14 (100%)</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>(9) 100%</b> | <b>85 (100%)</b> | <b>23 (100%)</b> | <b>236 (100%)</b>  |

Table 3.9. Counts and frequencies of ceramic cooking, serving, and storage vessels for bowl-dominated assemblages from Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Bowl-dominated assemblages | MdEbase_A        | MdEsw_A          | N1_B             | Total             |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Cooking                    | 11 (45.8%)       | 11 (52.4%)       | 5 (35.7%)        | <b>27 (45.8%)</b> |
| Serving                    | 13 (54.2%)       | 10 (47.6%)       | 9 (64.3%)        | <b>32 (54.2%)</b> |
| Storage                    | –                | –                | –                | –                 |
|                            | <b>24 (100%)</b> | <b>21 (100%)</b> | <b>14 (100%)</b> | <b>59 (100%)</b>  |

Table 3.10. Counts and frequencies of ceramic cooking, serving, and storage vessels for an intermediate assemblage from Parchman Place (22CO511).

| Intermediate assemblage | AB_A              |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Cooking                 | <b>18 (69.2%)</b> |
| Serving                 | <b>6 (23.1%)</b>  |
| Storage                 | <b>2 (7.7%)</b>   |
|                         | <b>24 (100%)</b>  |

While these frequencies are telling in and of themselves, an even more compelling pattern emerges when the functional categories of cooking, serving, and storage are broken down further. I identified eight functional categories for ceramic vessels at Parchman. These include boiling, parching, general serving, serving and heating, serving rare or perishable goods, serving liquids, storage and cooking, and storage. The “serving rare or perishable goods” category is further divided into fine service wares and coarse service wares, a distinction also made by the correspondence analysis.

Table 3.11. Jar-dominated ceramic assemblages from Parchman Place (22CO511) broken down by eight functional categories.

| Jar-dominated assemblages      | MdEbase_B          | N1_A             | MEsum_A          | MD_A            | MEsw_D           | AB_B             | Total             |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Boiling                        | 45 (58.4%)         | 10 (71.4%)       | 19 (67.9%)       | 3 (33.3%)       | 53 (62.4%)       | 14 (60.9%)       | <b>144 (61%)</b>  |
| Parching                       | —                  | —                | —                | —               | —                | —                | —                 |
| Serving                        | 12 (15.6%)         | 2 (14.3%)        | 2 (7.1%)         | 1 (11.1%)       | 18 (21.2%)       | 2 (8.7%)         | <b>37 (15.7%)</b> |
| Serving; heating               | 8 (10.4%)          | 1 (7.1%)         | 1 (3.6%)         | 1 (11.1%)       | 1 (1.2%)         | 1 (4.3%)         | <b>13 (5.5%)</b>  |
| Serving rare, perishable goods |                    |                  |                  |                 |                  |                  |                   |
| plain                          | 1 (1.3%)           | —                | —                | —               | —                | —                | <b>1 (.4%)</b>    |
| fine                           | 1 (1.3%)           | —                | —                | —               | —                | —                | <b>1 (.4%)</b>    |
| Serving/storing liquids        | 5 (6.5%)           | —                | 2 (7.1%)         | 2 (22.2%)       | 9 (10.6%)        | 2 (8.7%)         | <b>20 (8.5%)</b>  |
| Storage; cooking               | 2 (2.6%)           | 1 (7.1%)         | 3 (10.7%)        | 1 (11.1%)       | 3 (3.5%)         | 3 (13.0%)        | <b>13 (5.5%)</b>  |
| Storage                        | 3 (3.9%)           | —                | 1 (3.6%)         | 1 (11.1%)       | 1 (1.2%)         | 1 (4.3%)         | <b>7 (3.0%)</b>   |
|                                | <b>77 (100.0%)</b> | <b>14 (100%)</b> | <b>28 (100%)</b> | <b>9 (100%)</b> | <b>85 (100%)</b> | <b>23 (100%)</b> | <b>236 (100%)</b> |

Boiling in jars was the primary cooking method associated with jar-dominated assemblages (Table 3.11)—no vessels used for parching were identified. All four serving categories are present, represented by jars and bowls used for general purpose serving, bottles used to serve liquids, and small bowls/very small jars used to serve rare, valuable, or perishable goods. This latter function is exceedingly rare, occurring in only one out of six contexts. Finally, both storage categories are represented here by large and very large coarse ware jars. Because jar-dominated assemblages are ubiquitous at Parchman—occurring in both Parchman I and Parchman II sub-phases as well as in mound and residential contexts—I argue that they represent a baseline or everyday domestic assemblage.

### *Bowl Dominated Assemblages*

Bowl-dominated assemblages include two mound contexts and one residential context that plot to the right of the biplot. As a group, they are made up of approximately 46% cooking vessels and 54% serving vessels (Table 3.9). Bowl-dominated assemblages do not include any vessels intended for long-term storage.

Bowl-dominated assemblages can be considered exceptions to the more general pattern of the all-purpose jar-dominated assemblages. While they do contain coarse ware jars used for boiling, they are characterized by the presence of large coarse ware wide shallow bowls likely used for parching maize (Table 3.12). These special-use bowls occur in all three bowl-dominated assemblages but are absent from jar-dominated assemblages. The intermediate assemblage also contains a large coarse wide shallow bowl. While the primary function of these bowls was parching, I suspect they were also used to serve prepared foods to large groups of people. Bowl-dominated assemblages are further characterized by the ubiquitous presence of small and very small bowls used for serving rare, valuable, or perishable goods. Finally, they are completely lacking in vessels that could be identified as having a storage function. These characteristics of bowl-dominated assemblages suggest that they are serving assemblages associated with communal eating events or feasts characterized by large quantities of food, foods cooked in non-typical ways (e.g. parching), and foods that were rare or valuable. I argue below that these feasts are related to the founding of the Parchman community.

Table 3.12 Bowl-dominated ceramic assemblages from Parchman Place (22CO511) broken down by eight functional categories.

| <b>Bowl-dominated assemblages</b>     | <b>MdEbase_A</b> | <b>MdEsw_A</b>   | <b>N1_B</b>      | <b>Total</b>      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Boiling</b>                        | 10 (41%)         | 10 (47.6%)       | 4 (28.6%)        | <b>24 (40.7%)</b> |
| <b>Parching</b>                       | 1 (4.2%)         | 1 (4.8%)         | 1 (7.1%)         | <b>3 (5.1%)</b>   |
| <b>Serving</b>                        | 7 (29.2%)        | 5 (23.8%)        | 6 (42.9%)        | <b>18 (30.5%)</b> |
| <b>Serving; heating</b>               | –                | 1 (4.8%)         | –                | <b>1 (1.7%)</b>   |
| <b>Serving rare, perishable goods</b> |                  |                  |                  |                   |
| <b>plain</b>                          | –                | 2 (9.5%)         | 2 (14.3%)        | <b>4 (6.8%)</b>   |
| <b>fine</b>                           | 3 (12.5%)        | –                | –                | <b>3 (5.1%)</b>   |
| <b>Serving/storing liquids</b>        | 3 (12.5%)        | 2 (9.5%)         | 1 (7.1%)         | <b>6 (10.2%)</b>  |
| <b>Storage; cooking</b>               | –                | –                | –                | <b>–</b>          |
| <b>Storage</b>                        | –                | –                | –                | <b>–</b>          |
|                                       | <b>24 (100%)</b> | <b>21 (100%)</b> | <b>14 (100%)</b> | <b>59 (100%)</b>  |

As indicated above, the correspondence analysis separates bowl-dominated contexts on the second dimension. This distinction is primarily based on differences among bowls used to serve rare, valuable, or perishable goods. Coarse ware bowls, namely very small pinch bowls, fulfill this functional role for two of the bowl-dominated assemblages—one mound context and one residential context that plot in the lower right quadrant. The remaining bowl-dominated assemblage (a mound context that plots in the upper right quadrant) is characterized by small, finely made, carinated and restricted bowls.

The presence of restricted and carinated bowls is significant given that neither the vessel shape nor the paste type is local to the region. These vessels were almost certainly made by people to the south, either in the southern portion of the Yazoo Basin or the Natchez Bluffs. Though functionally similar to vessels used elsewhere at Parchman, these bowls may indicate status- or identity-based differences among groups involved in similar activities. The presence of non-local fine ware vessels in certain contexts at Parchman could indicate a status-based difference among groups if one group had access to “exotic,” non-local goods not available to everyone. Alternatively, they may simply indicate a kinship or trade relationship with other Mississippian groups outside the region.

In summary, I identified two major divisions in ceramic sub-assemblages at Parchman. Jar-dominated assemblages occur in mound and residential contexts throughout Parchman’s history and serve as a baseline assemblage that fulfills everyday cooking, serving, and storage needs. Bowl-dominated assemblages, on the other hand, are focused on activities related to large scale eating events, including specialized bowls for parching maize and serving large groups of people as well as small serving vessels used to hold rare, valuable, or perishable goods. Bowl-dominated assemblages can be further subdivided on the basis of vessels used to fulfill the latter

function. On the one hand, some contexts are associated with coarse pinch bowls, which serve the purpose, but are rather rough and utilitarian. On the other hand, one context is associated with finely made and decorated carinated and restricted bowls of non-local manufacture. These vessels are not only visibly attractive, but also readily convey a social relationship with other Mississippian groups. I suggest people used these vessels to communicate a status- or identity-based difference from people taking part in similar activities elsewhere at Parchman.

When we consider temporal variation in functional vessel assemblages it is evident that most large-scale communal eating events identified at Parchman occurred early in the site's history, during the Parchman I sub-phase. The two mound contexts with bowl-dominated assemblages date to the early-to-mid 14<sup>th</sup> century and represent some of the earliest activities taking place here. Large wide shallow bowls are ubiquitous in Parchman I contexts and absent from Parchman II (15<sup>th</sup> century) contexts. All restricted bowls and all but one carinated bowl also occur during the earlier sub-phase. These circumstances suggest that feasting was a major activity associated with the founding of the Parchman community, and that it was particularly associated with the initiation of mound building. Though there is evidence of other "specialized" activities associated with mound building during Parchman II (see Chapter 4), these large-scale feasting activities appear to be confined to the earliest mound building contexts. Bowl-dominated and intermediate assemblages from non-mound contexts suggest that large-scale communal eating events also took place in other contexts during Parchman I, including in residential areas. These contexts are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The lack of evidence for large-scale eating events associated with 15<sup>th</sup> century mound or neighborhood contexts suggests that community building during the Parchman II sub-phase took a different form.

## CHAPTER 4

### MOUND BUILDING AT PARCHMAN

The most visible aspects of many Mississippian archaeological sites are the large earthworks erected by past communities, including mounds of various shapes, sizes, and functions. Consequently, mounds and mound building figure prominently in recent and not-so-recent interpretations of the nature of Mississippian social organization. While this is not the place for an exhaustive review of mound building in North America or the ways archaeologists have thought about mounds and mound building (see Knight 1989, Lindauer and Blitz 1997, and Sherwood and Kidder 2011 for relevant reviews), a number of prominent interpretive trajectories have influenced our understandings of the meanings of Mississippian mounds, the ways in which they were built, and the uses to which they were put. The following is a summary of those interpretations I find most useful for understanding the history of mound building at Parchman.

1) *Mississippian mounds are frequently affiliated with specific individuals or particular groups (or subgroups) of people.* Although it is not yet clear how far back in time the tradition extends, it is well documented in the ethnographic and archaeological literature that Mississippian platform mound summits served as residences for powerful individuals, typically political and religious leaders. The De Soto narratives (Clayton et al. 1993; Hudson 1998; Swanton 1939) describe powerful chiefs who resided on large platform mounds throughout the southeastern United States and whose influence in warfare and other civic matters was far-

reaching. Frequently, lesser chiefs resided on mounds located in smaller, outlying towns and acted as intermediaries between the people of those towns and the central chiefly authority. In some cases, leadership was divided among two individuals and the clans they belonged to. In such cases, it was common practice to have a “red” chief who dealt with external matters (warfare, diplomacy) and a “white” chief who dealt with internal matters, each of whom resided on mound tops. In early 18<sup>th</sup> century accounts, the French describe the largest mound at the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians as home to the Natchez chief or Great Sun. The Great Sun’s brother, Tattooed Serpent, presided over matters of warfare (Brown and Steponaitis n.d.; Swanton 1911). Archaeologists have since identified the mounds described in the French accounts of the Grand Village (Neitzel 1965, 1983).

In addition to powerful individuals, mounds can be affiliated with *groups* of people. At Moundville, for instance, platform mounds are understood as corporate in nature, affiliated with particular kin-based segments of the population that also maintained distinct residential and mortuary areas at the site (Knight 1998, 2010; Scarry and Steponaitis 2016; Wilson 2008). Knight (2010:365) argues that mound building and mound summit activities are indicative of the “pervasive sharedness of authority at Moundville.”

2) *Size is often significant, and has been used by archaeologists as a measure of the relative status of affiliated individuals, corporate groups, or towns.* Blitz and Livingood (2004:291) discuss two alternative interpretations of the sociopolitical implications of mound building and mound height. One leading interpretation suggests that the overall size and/or volume of an individual mound reflects the duration of the mound’s use, something akin to Hally’s (1996) argument that “the duration of platform mound construction and use coincided with the duration of the chiefly polity that used the mound” (Blitz and Livingood 2004:292).



Blitz and Livingood, however, maintain that much of the variation observed in mound volume must be attributed to factors other than duration of use, including the ability of individual chiefs to acquire and coordinate labor (Blitz and Livingood 2004:299). Therefore, differences in mound size (and by implication, differences in size or thickness of mound additions) are not simply a matter of time, but are a reflection of power.

Mound size has also been taken as an estimate of the relative status of Mississippian corporate groups and towns. In the example from Moundville cited above, Knight (1998) argues that corporate groups affiliated with paired mounds are ranked in status and that those whose mounds were larger and closer to the paramount mound were more highly ranked than those whose mounds were smaller and further away. On a larger scale, many researchers have used mound size along with sheer number of mounds to organize sites into regional settlement hierarchies within single Mississippian polities (e.g. Anderson 1994, Hally 1993, Steponaitis 1978). The sheer size of Monks Mound at Cahokia as well as the number of other sizable mounds is one (among many) reasons Cahokia is considered unique in the Mississippian world (Dalan et al. 2003; Pauketat 2004).

3) *The process of mound building is distinct from mound summit use.* Knight (1986:678-680) suggests that regardless of the use to which their summits are put, mounds are “fundamentally iconic in nature....drawing on the most fundamental core symbols and metaphors of the society at large.” A unique attribute of Mississippian mounds is their “deliberate ritual rebuilding through the periodic addition of earth mantles” (Knight 1981:44). Knight interprets these acts of rebuilding as rituals of renewal, in which purification of polluted entities takes place, and balance is restored in the world. Such rituals may take place annually at specific times of the year and may also be practiced as needed. In particular, Knight sees a

parallel between prehistoric mound renewal and historic rites of intensification such as the busk or green corn ceremony practiced by the Creeks and other historic southeastern Indians. Mound ceremonialism is thus considered a long-standing tradition in the southeastern United States, one with deep roots in prehistory and indeed, one that is still practiced among Native American groups today, albeit in transformed fashion. Regardless of the use to which mound summits are put, the mounds themselves are symbolic of the earth, the community, and the Mississippian world, and building them has implications for maintaining balance and purity within the community and the world.

4). *Mound building is a complex feat of technological and symbolic engineering.*

Sherwood and Kidder (2011) as well as others (e.g. Charles et al. 2004, Pauketat 2008) have argued persuasively that building a monument out of earth requires more than simply piling up whatever dirt is located nearby. Rather, mounds were carefully planned and executed and builders selected materials for mound building based on the specifics of their desired properties. For instance, many mound builders used alternating fills of different textures “to improve moisture balance and create horizontal stress zones that act to increase slope strength and reduce sheer stress” (Sherwood and Kidder 2011:78). In some cases, specific soils were mined from well beneath the surface or transported considerable distances from their source for use in mound building. Other building practices that affect the structural integrity of earthen mounds include the use of sod blocks and berms, basket loading, zoned fills, and veneers, to name just a few (Sherwood and Kidder 2011:74-82).

In addition to their attention to engineering principles, mound builders used particular materials to achieve aesthetic and symbolic goals. At places like Shiloh and Cahokia distinct colorful veneers were placed on mound surfaces to achieve a desired appearance. Purcell (2004) has found

that use of brightly colored sediments is a widespread phenomenon among Mississippian mound builders in the Southeast and Midwest, and that particular colors have meaningful (if variable) associations with concepts central to Native American worldviews, including ideas related to “elite status, supernatural/spiritual mediation, clan affiliation or kinship, and the Mississippian cosmology” (Pursell 2004:17). Others have gone even further in their attempts to understand the use of special sediments used in particular mound building contexts. Charles et al. (2004) focus on the ritual significance of sediments in Hopewell mound constructions in Illinois. They note that particular sediments used in constructing these earthworks are (1) transported considerable distances, (2) deposited intentionally, and (3) chosen for their visibility, durability, or symbolism. They incorporate ethnographically reconstructed understandings of southeastern cosmologies as well as the earth diver myth to suggest that the building of these mounds re-enacts creation (Charles et al. 2004:50; see also Hall 1997:17-23). Pauketat (2008) has also emphasized the importance of understanding *local* meanings of depositional practices (see also McAnany and Hodder 2009). He suggests that the meanings encoded in the aesthetic qualities of sediments used in effigy mound construction in southern Wisconsin were transformed following the Cahokian disjuncture in the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. Before this disjuncture, sediment attributes such as color and texture referenced “generic supernatural forces” (Pauketat 2008:67) in the context of communal ritual. Afterwards, these same aesthetic qualities referenced the association of earth and sky powers with the elite leaders of Cahokia.

5). *Mound building is a process of social negotiation.* This is another way of saying that “traditions are the media of change, coopted and promoted in ways that selectively draw from the past” (Pauketat and Alt 2003:161). The “change of emphasis within an unbroken ritual tradition” exemplified by a transition from mound building to square ground ceremonial among some

southeastern Indian groups (Knight 1989:280) may be an illustration of how this works in the long term, but we can also see it on the micro-scale, in the mound building practices of Mississippian people. Pauketat suggests that a change in the “rhythm” of mound construction as evidenced by the relative thickness of various fill episodes or mantle additions “may be of significance for understanding region-wide political-religious changes in the late prehistoric American Bottom.” Early construction stages at the Kunnemann Mound were “small-scale,” suggesting that the act of constructing the mound was more important than its elevation (Pauketat 1993:146). Later, a shift occurs in the size of fill units; individual mound construction stages become significantly larger. Pauketat suggests that “a major structural change of some kind occurred around the late Stirling phases and is reflected in the rhythmic shift in mound construction” (Pauketat 1993:146). He further suggests that the dominant symbolic meaning might have shifted from an early emphasis on moundtop activities such as renewal and purification rituals to a later emphasis on mound height as symbolic of power relations (Pauketat 1993:147).

What this all means, for our purposes, is that past individuals undoubtedly understood mounds and mound building in various ways and that the meanings people associated with mounds could be held simultaneously and/or be variously emphasized at different points in the process of building and using a single mound. It goes without saying that individuals involved in the conceptualization, construction, and modification of mounds had differing goals as well as differential opportunities to realize those goals. In order to tease apart the social implications (McAnany and Hodder 2009) of the simultaneous and often contradictory meanings and actions recorded in mound stratigraphy, it is critically important to consider the historical trajectory of mound building at multiple scales—within regions, at single sites, and within individual mounds.

## **Mound Excavations at Parchman**

Archaeological evidence indicates that social and political negotiations were ongoing at Parchman, and these negotiations are reflected in and enabled by the mound building practices of the people who lived there. Clark (2000:106) challenges archaeologists to look for evidence of individual actions and events in the archaeological record, emphasizing the importance of uncovering “fine-grained chronologies and spatial scales compatible with individual life histories and events.” I contend that further interpretation of detailed stratigraphic information from Parchman will facilitate greater understanding of the processes by which the people who lived there created their own social realities. The following sections outline the results of mound investigations at Parchman from 2002 to 2011. Locations of all excavations are shown in Figure 1.8. Mound excavations are shown in Figure 4.1.

### *Mound A Summit Excavation*

The Mound A summit excavation (Figure 4.1) was conducted by Aaron Fogel, then a graduate student at the University of Mississippi (UM), and a crew of UM field school students in the summer of 2004. Fogel’s (2005) M.A. thesis focused on the excavation and interpretation of a mound top structure in this location. The main excavation block consists of 5 1 x 1 m units forming a trench oriented north-south and is supplemented by two adjacent (.5 x 2 m and .5 x 1 m) units placed to the west to follow the contours of a structure floor located within the original trench. The original five units were placed to bisect a strongly magnetic anomaly detected in the magnetic gradiometer survey that we suspected was a burned mound-top structure, and which was confirmed by excavation (Figure 4.2). Four additional 1 x 1 m units were located southwest

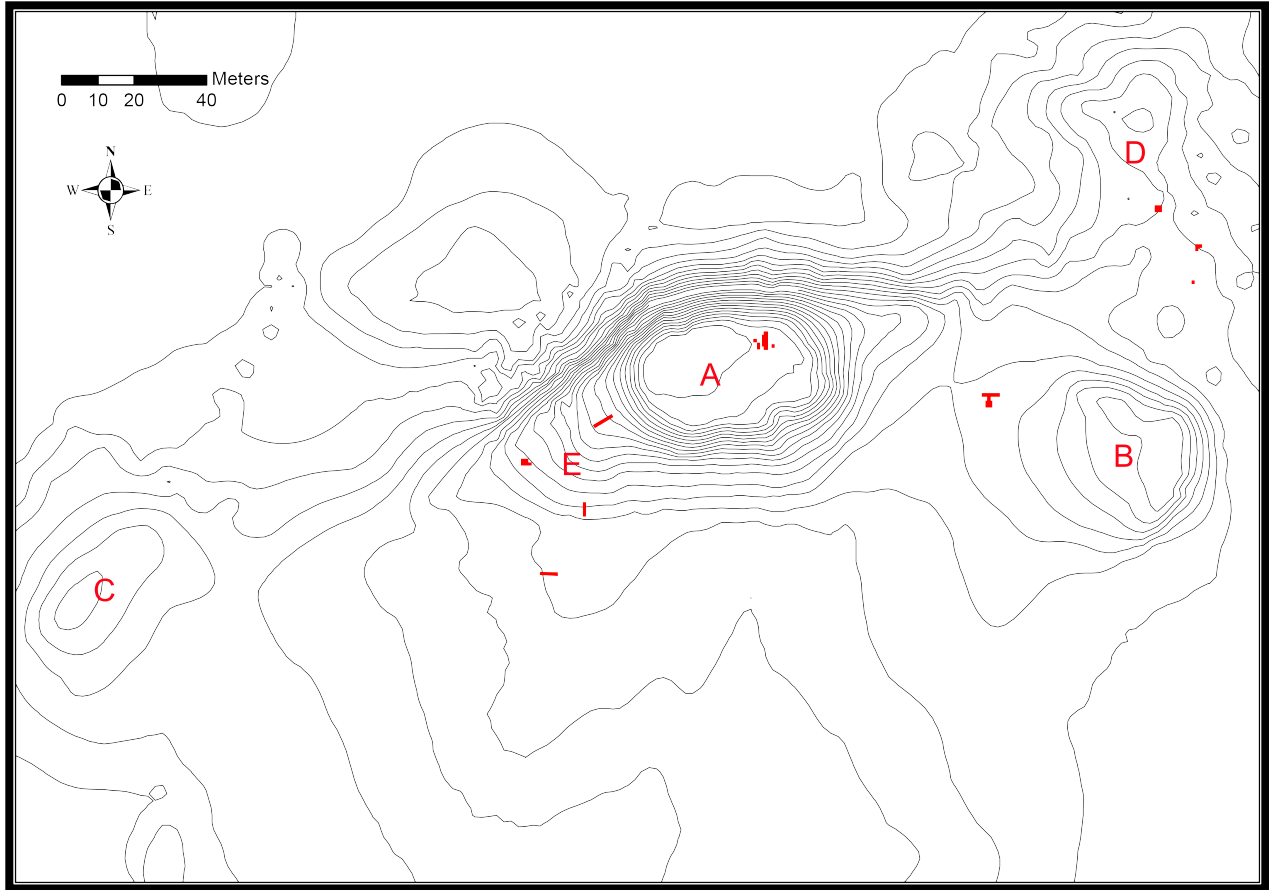


Figure 4.1. Topographic map of mound group showing location of excavations at Parchman Place (22CO511).

and southeast of the main trench to intersect the edges of the structure identified in the gradiometer data and to determine its shape. The excavation terminated on the fired floor targeted, not much more than 50 cm below the current mound surface. Figure 4.3 shows the eastern profile of the main excavation trench.

The following description begins at the base of the excavations and works toward the surface. The base of the Mound A excavation block terminates on the fired floor of a mound top structure that was swept clean and burned at the end of its use life. Fogel (2005) refers to this as “Structure 2” and I will do the same. There are no artifacts in direct contact with the floor.

Excavations near the edge of the building suggest that the magnetic gradiometer map accurately

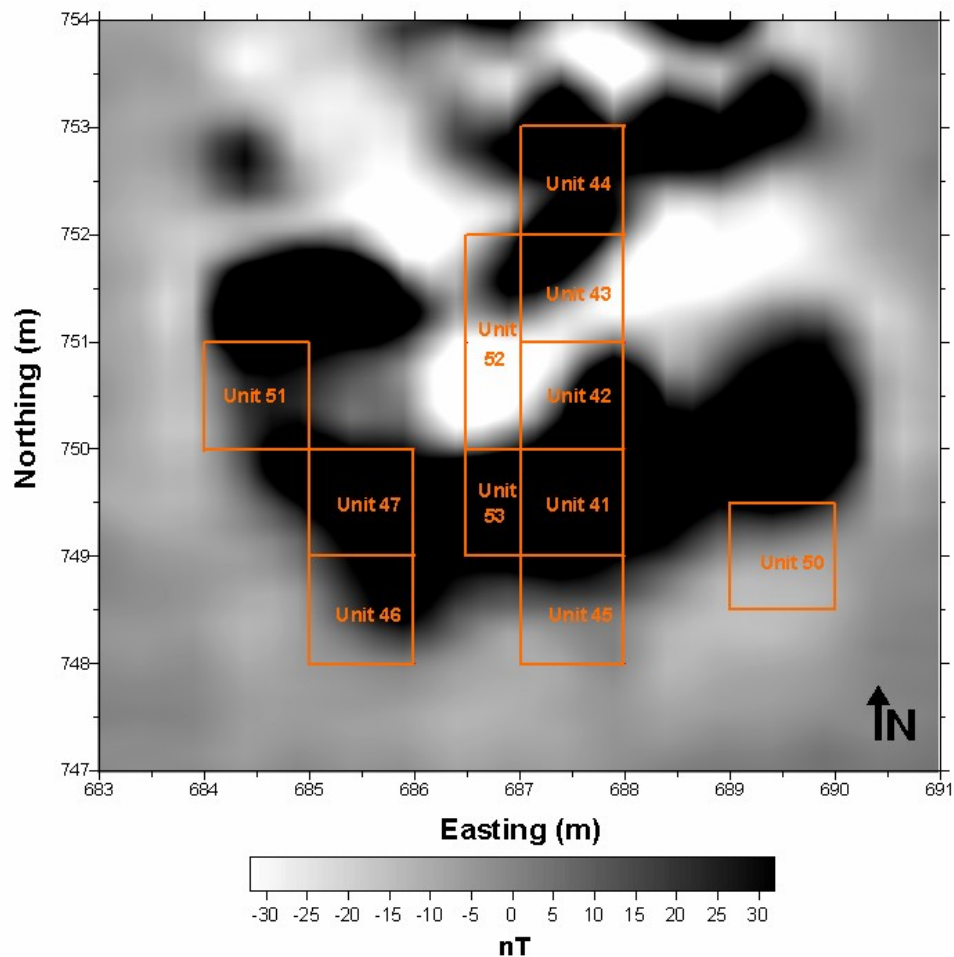


Figure 4.2. Magnetic anomaly on Mound A with location of excavation units.

depicts the size and shape of the structure—roughly 4 m x 6 m and rectangular, though it may have had rounded corners. Structure 2 is unusual for buildings at Parchman and for Mississippian mound top structures in general in that it is basin-shaped. That is, it is sunken in the middle and slopes up toward the edges. Despite the disturbance interrupting the floor toward the north end of the profile, the Structure 2 floor is intact within the excavation unit and Fogel reports that it is a continuous, sloped surface (Figure 4.4). The trench profile shown in Figure 4.3 indicates a nearly 20 cm difference in elevation between the edges and the center of the building, and the sloping is

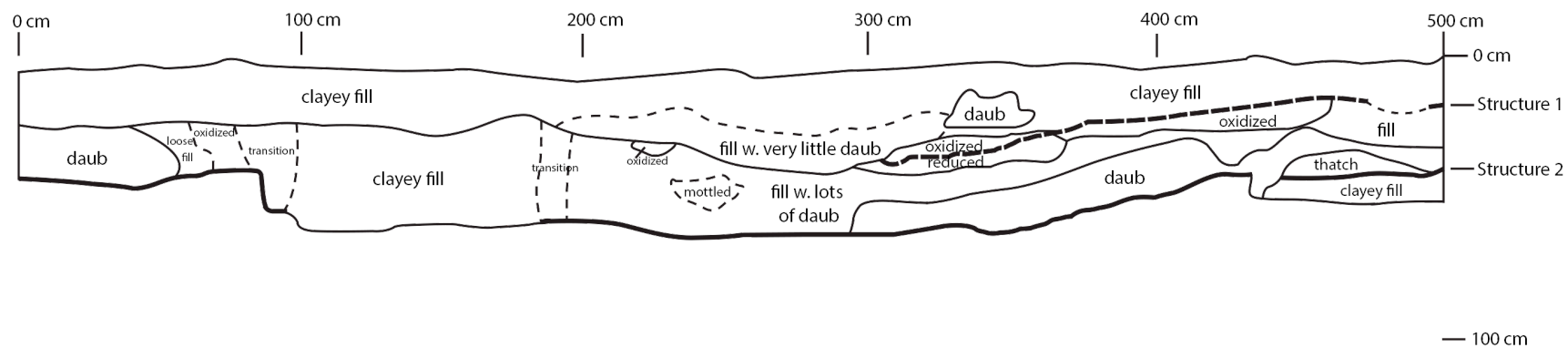


Figure 4.3. East profile of Mound A summit excavation at Parchman Place (22C0511).





Figure 4.4. Photograph of Mound A summit excavation, Structure 2 floor. View NNW.

also evident in the outlying units. Magnetic susceptibility confirms the unusual shape of the structure floor (see Fogel 2005:44-69).

Certainly, the basin-shaped floor is unexpected. Whether the observed shape represents how the floor was originally built and used or whether it is the result of a subsequent destructive event is unknown. Though Fogel (2005:38, 71) emphasizes the continuous nature of the floor, I suspect the latter scenario is more likely. The photograph of the exposed Structure 2 Floor (Figure 4.4) indicates that the floor has seen some rough treatment and the portions adjacent to the sunken interior section have been completely removed. If this floor *was* partially removed/destroyed at some point after the building was burned, it would not be the only instance of intentional destruction of a burned mound top structure at Parchman. At least one of the

buildings on the summit of Mound E was treated in this way before it was replaced by another episode of mound building (see discussion below).

The deposits immediately on top of the Structure 2 floor consist primarily of structural remains including fired daub rubble and thatch. In the southwestern portion of the building temperatures burned so hot as to vitrify the wall material. After the daub fell to the floor, a layer of fill containing abundant daub inclusions was deposited over the destroyed building remains. Unfortunately, a rather large portion of the Structure 2 floor is missing from the east profile, indicating a disturbance that destroyed part of the floor in this location. This was interpreted by Fogel (2005:37) as a possible intrusive pit, though its boundaries are not clearly drawn on the profile map. The fill associated with this intrusion is higher in clay content and contains fewer daub inclusions than the surrounding matrix.

Following the burial of Structure 2 and (possibly?) the intrusion that partially destroyed the structure floor, there is some evidence that another building (“Structure 1”) was built in the same location. The remnants of another floor-like deposit are visible toward the southern end of the east profile wall. By floor-like, I mean fired hard and oxidized to a characteristic reddish-orange color. However, unlike Structure 2, Structure 1’s floor does not continue throughout the rest of the excavation. The best evidence for a second structure, therefore, is an intrusive wall trench located in Units 46 and 47. This wall trench cuts through Structure 2’s floor and is oriented north-south, indicating the two buildings were oriented slightly differently. A sample of charred wood from a post associated with the wall trench returned an AMS date of cal 350 ± 30 B.P. (Table 4.1). While this wall trench cannot be positively correlated with the Structure 1 floor remnants evident in the profile of the main trench, it supplies definitive evidence of a second structure superimposing the earlier, more intact one. Since most of the evidence for Structure 1 is

Table 4.1. C14 dates for excavated contexts at Parchman Place (22C0511).

| Context/Analysis Unit (AU)                                 | Material Dated | Uncal C14 Age (BP) | 1 $\sigma$ Cal Date Range  | 2 $\sigma$ Cal Date Range   | Laboratory                              | Lab #       |
|--|----------------|--------------------|--|---|---|-------------|
| Md B structure   | Thatch         | 340 $\pm$ 95       | AD 1466-1642 (68.2%)   | AD 1408-1688 (86.2%)<br>AD 1730-1809 (7.0%)<br>AD 1926-... * (2.3%) | Center for Applied Isotope Studies, UGA | UGA-5286    |
| Md A summit structure<br>(Mound A summit, AU A)            | Post           | 350 $\pm$ 30       | AD 1480-1522 (29.4%)<br>AD 1572-1630 (38.8%)                         | AD 1458-1530 (41.3%)<br>AD 1538-1635 (54.1%)                        | Beta Analytic                           | Beta-418054 |
| Md E post-truncation structure<br>(Mound E summit, AU C/D) | Thatch         | 390 $\pm$ 40       | AD 1445-1516 (53.6%)<br>AD 1596-1618 (14.6%)                         | AD 1436-1528 (60.8%)<br>AD 1544-1634 (34.6%)                        | Beta Analytic                           | Beta-215212 |
| N3 late pot break<br>(Unit 11-13, AU A)                    | Corn           | 446 $\pm$ 38       | AD 1424-1465 (68.2%)   | AD 1410-1512 (91.8%)<br>AD 1600-1616 (3.6%)                         | Arizona AMS Laboratory                  | X26166A     |
| Md E pre-truncation structure<br>(Mound E summit, AU A)    | Thatch         | 470 $\pm$ 40       | AD 1416-1450 (68.2%)   | AD 1330-1339 (1.0%)<br>AD 1396-1489 (93.9%)<br>AD 1603-1608 (0.6%)  | Beta Analytic                           | Beta-215215 |
| Md D late structure<br>(Mound D, AU A)                     | Hickory Shell  | 478 $\pm$ 38       | AD 1417-1446 (68.2%)   | AD 1330-1340 (1.3%)<br>AD 1396-1474 (94.1%)                         | Arizona AMS Laboratory                  | X26161A     |
| N1 between structures 2 & 3<br>(Neighborhood 1, AU A)      | Cane           | 482 $\pm$ 38       | AD 1415-1445 (68.2%)   | AD 1328-1341 (2.0%)<br>AD 1396-1469 (93.4%)                         | Arizona AMS Laboratory                  | X26163A     |
| Md E SW structure<br>(Mound E SW, AU B/C)                  | Cane           | 500 $\pm$ 38       | AD 1410-1440 (68.2%)   | AD 1322-1346 (7.5%)<br>AD 1392-1453 (87.9%)                         | Arizona AMS Laboratory                  | X26159A     |
| N3 early structure<br>(Unit 10-4, AU A)                    | Thatch         | 505 $\pm$ 38       | AD 1407-1440 (68.2%)   | AD 1320-1349 (10.0%)<br>AD 1391-1452 (85.4%)                        | Arizona AMS Laboratory                  | X26165A     |
| N2 early structure<br>(Neighborhood 2, AU A)               | Corn           | 547 $\pm$ 38       | AD 1324-1346 (25.0%)<br>AD 1393-1425 (43.2%)                         | AD 1306-1364 (41.9%)<br>AD 1384-1438 (53.5%)                        | Arizona AMS Laboratory                  | X26164A     |
| A-B Swale late structure<br>(A-B Swale, AU B/C)            | Post           | 570 $\pm$ 60       | AD 1308-1362 (41.8%)<br>AD 1386-1419 (26.4%)                         | AD 1292-1436 (95.4%)  | Beta-Analytic                           | Beta-219713 |
| Md E top of first mound stage<br>(Mound E SW, AU A/B)      | Thatch         | 580 $\pm$ 40       | AD 1310-1360 (48.9%)<br>AD 1386-1407 (19.3%)                         | AD 1296-1417 (95.4%)  | Beta-Analytic                           | Beta-223031 |
| Md E basal midden<br>(Mound E base, AU A)                  | Cane           | 597 $\pm$ 38       | AD 1308-1362 (53.1%)<br>AD 1386-1402 (15.1%)                         | AD 1296-1412 (95.4%)  | Arizona AMS Laboratory                  | X26160A     |
| A-B Swale basal midden<br>(A-B Swale, AU A)                | Pecan Shell    | 609 $\pm$ 39       | AD 1301-1331 (27.1%)<br>AD 1338-1368 (27.1%)<br>AD 1382-1398 (14.0%) | AD 1291-1409 (95.4%)  | Arizona AMS Laboratory                  | X26167A     |
| N1 original surface<br>(Neighborhood 1, AU A)              | Thatch         | 640 $\pm$ 30       | AD 1292-1316 (27.0%)<br>AD 1355-1388 (40.7%)                         | AD 1282-1329 (41.0%)<br>AD 1340-1396 (54.4%)                        | Beta Analytic                           | Beta-418055 |

\*Date extends out of range

missing, it may be that the remains of the building were removed in the same event that damaged the floor of Structure 2. Whether or not this event was intentional is unknown, but I think it is a possibility that should be considered.

The final deposits in the Mound A building sequence include a fill zone presumably related to the burial of Structure 1. Though this fill contains very few daub fragments, there are a few large pieces of fired daub located in the same vicinity. The top 20 cm of soil in the Mound A

summit excavations consists of clayey fill that has been disturbed by plowing or other activities. This is where most of the artifacts recovered from this excavation block were located. This disturbed zone terminates in the southern portion of the main trench on the presumed floor of Structure 1.

Although the Mound A Summit excavation encountered evidence of at least two burned structures, the remains of the second structure were not well preserved. Because of this scanty evidence, it is unclear how deposits visible in the trench profile (Figure 4.3) are related to the two structure floors. For this reason, the entire sequence was treated as one analysis unit (AU A) for the purposes of artifact analysis (see Table 1.1).

#### *Mound E Base Excavation*

An excavation placed at the southern slope of Mound E (Figure 4.1) consists of five 1 m x 1 m units forming a 5 m x 1 m trench oriented north-south. The trench was excavated by University of Mississippi (UM) field school students in the summer of 2003 and supervised by Nahide Aydin, then a graduate student at UM. Excavations reached approximately 280 cm at their deepest point in the southernmost unit of the trench.

Two major mound construction episodes and one mound surface were identified within the excavation trench (Figure 4.5). The following narrative describes the Mound E Base fill zones in the order in which they were deposited—that is, from the bottom up.

The first zone shown in Figure 4.5 is Zone J, which I interpret as a natural soil horizon. It is not described as subsoil in the field notes, though one excavator characterizes it as “natural” with no charcoal or daub. It consists of light yellowish brown clay. Excavations were halted at this level, presumably because the excavators believed they had reached sterile subsoil.

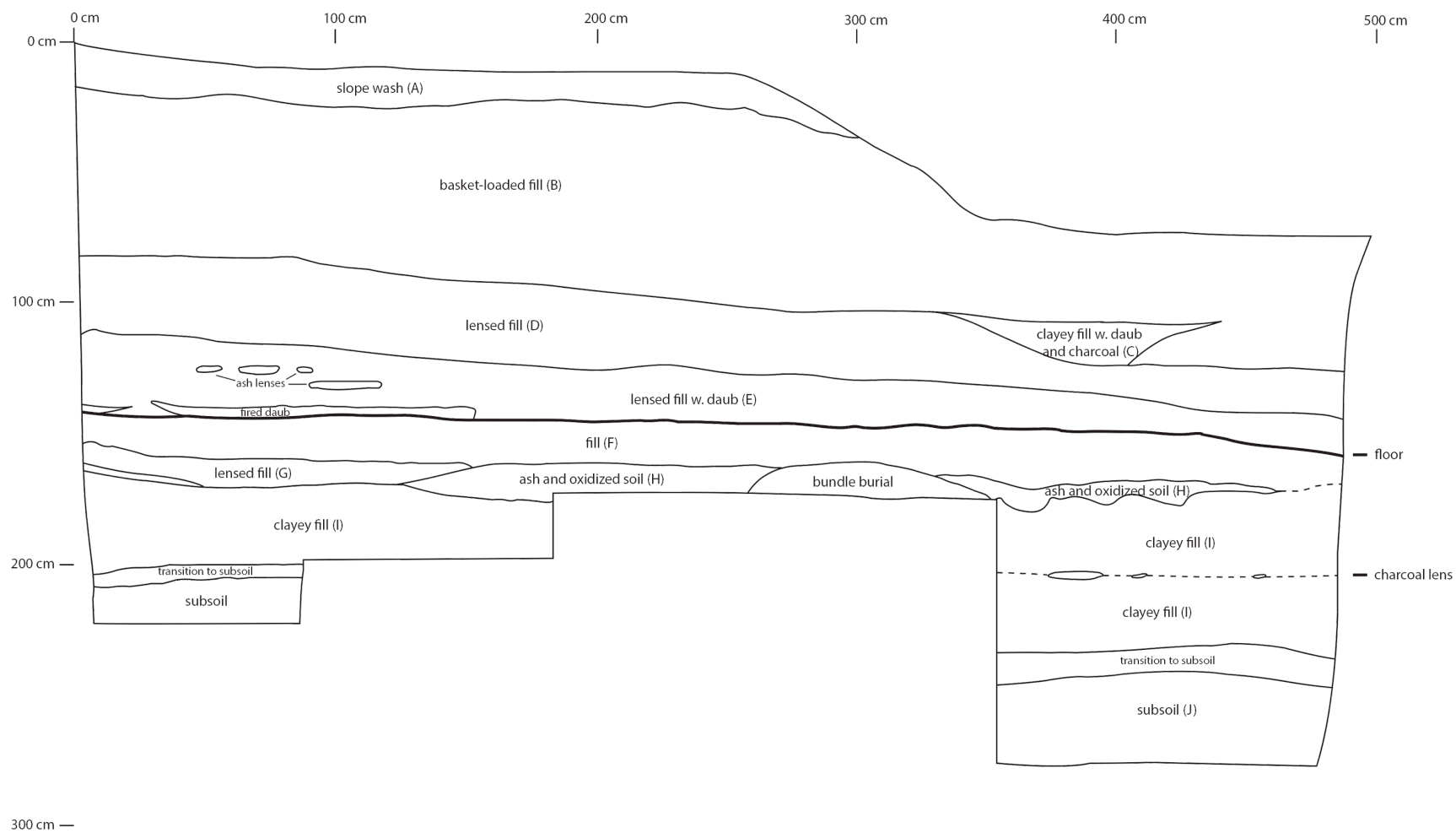


Figure 4.5. East profile wall of Mound E base trench, Parchman Place (22CO511).

On top of this natural soil horizon is Zone I, described as grayish brown basket-loaded clay with a small number of artifacts. Zone I is from 30-60 cm deep and likely represents more than one deposit. Halfway through it on the south side, where it is thickest, it is interrupted by a thin and discontinuous layer composed of charcoal and white clay, then more identical fill was placed on top. The bottom part of Zone I might have been put there to create a level surface, as the charcoal/clay surface is exactly level with the bottom of the zone of fill on the north side. In other words, the original ground surface sloped towards the south; Zone I (or part of it) may have been deposited in order to create a level surface. A sample of burned cane from the base of the Zone I deposit returned a date of cal 597 $\pm$ 38 B.P. (Table 4.1). This dates the first episode of the construction of Mound E.

The cremated bundle burial of an adult male was placed into Zone I. Gabriel Wrobel, a bioarchaeologist then with the University of Mississippi, was called in to record the burial (Wrobel 2003). After recording, the remains were reburied and excavation was discontinued in this area. It is not clear if the burial was placed here before the first stage of mound building commenced, or if it was placed into Zone I after the clay soils were deposited. Wrobel's notes as well as the excavator's indicate that there is a layer of ash above the burial deposit, though the profile map indicates that this layer (Zone H) is discontinuous and does not completely cover the burial. In either case, it is clear that the burial is associated with the commencement of mound building in this location.

Zone H, which superimposes the burial, is variously described by excavators as "a layer of ash (~1-2 cm thick)," or alternatively, as oxidized soil with ash lenses. As stated above, this deposit composed of or including an abundance of ash was just on top of or associated with the bundled human remains just described. Though it is tempting to interpret this burned zone as a

result of the cremation of the bundled remains (i.e. that the remains were cremated *in situ*), the soil matrix surrounding the burial (Zone I) is not oxidized. Additionally, funerary practices documented at the nearby contemporaneous Carson site (James 2010; 2015) argue against this interpretation. I find it more plausible that the remains were cremated in advance of bundling and burial, and that the ash associated with Zone H was placed there to mark the place as meaningful, one of multiple instances of the incorporation of special substances in mound building at Parchman. These are discussed in more detail below.

Following the burial and the placement of an ashy deposit on top of it, the area was covered with additional fill. Zone G, present at the north end of the profile, consists of lensed clay loam. Zone F, which caps the underlying deposits, is described as dark brown silt loam with daub, charcoal, and abundant artifact inclusions. The surface of Zone F terminates in a living surface or floor, reddish in color and 5-6 cm thick. A wall trench with at least one posthole originates at this floor and is located in the southernmost unit of the trench. Presumably, the wall trench and post indicate that the bulk of the excavation is inside the building. However, like other buildings at Parchman, this one was swept clean prior to its destruction by burning and no artifacts were recovered in association with the floor. A layer composed of fired daub and thatch is in contact with the floor in the northernmost units of the trench. These materials were used in the construction of the building's walls and roof and likely fell to their present location when the building was burned.

The second major episode of mound building begins after the destruction of the building on the first Mound E summit. The fired floor as well as the layer of burned daub is all covered over with Zone E, an approximately 20 cm fill zone described as “lensed” clayey silt with daub inclusions. Some of the lenses on the north end of the trench are made of white clay—these

lenses have a lot of associated artifacts including bone and fish scales. On top of this is another “lensed” fill zone (Zone D) composed of clayey silt loam, with abundant artifacts. It differs from Zone E in having fewer daub inclusions. A localized deposit rich in daub and charcoal (Zone C) was then deposited on top of Zone D in the southern portion of the trench. Finally, Zone B consists of a massive basket-loaded fill zone about 70 cm deep that caps the whole mound slope. No evidence of additional mound surfaces or buildings was found. Zone A is slope wash composed of loose topsoil with daub inclusions.

For the purposes of analysis, I have combined the fill zones into two primary analysis units corresponding with the two episodes of primary construction (Table 1.1). Analysis Unit A comprises the first episode of mound construction and consists of the sterile pre-mound surface and four zones of fill deposited on top of it. Analysis Unit B consists of five zones of fill terminating at the current mound surface. In between Analysis Units A and B is a mound surface interpreted as a floor with a layer of fired daub sitting on its surface.

### *Mound E Southwest Slope Excavation*

An excavation block located on the southwest slope of Mound E (Figure 4.1) consists of five 1 x 1 m units, the deepest of which reach sterile subsoil approximately two meters below the current mound surface. This block was excavated by Matt Reynolds, then a graduate student at the University of Mississippi, and UM field school students in the summers of 2003 and 2004. The following narrative describes the stratigraphy from the bottom up (Figures 4.6 and 4.7).

The original ground surface consists of clayey sand that is variously described as an E horizon or a B horizon in field notes (elsewhere on the site Rachel Stout-Evans, a soil scientist with the NRCS, has characterized the subsoil as a Bt horizon). Coring from the base of the



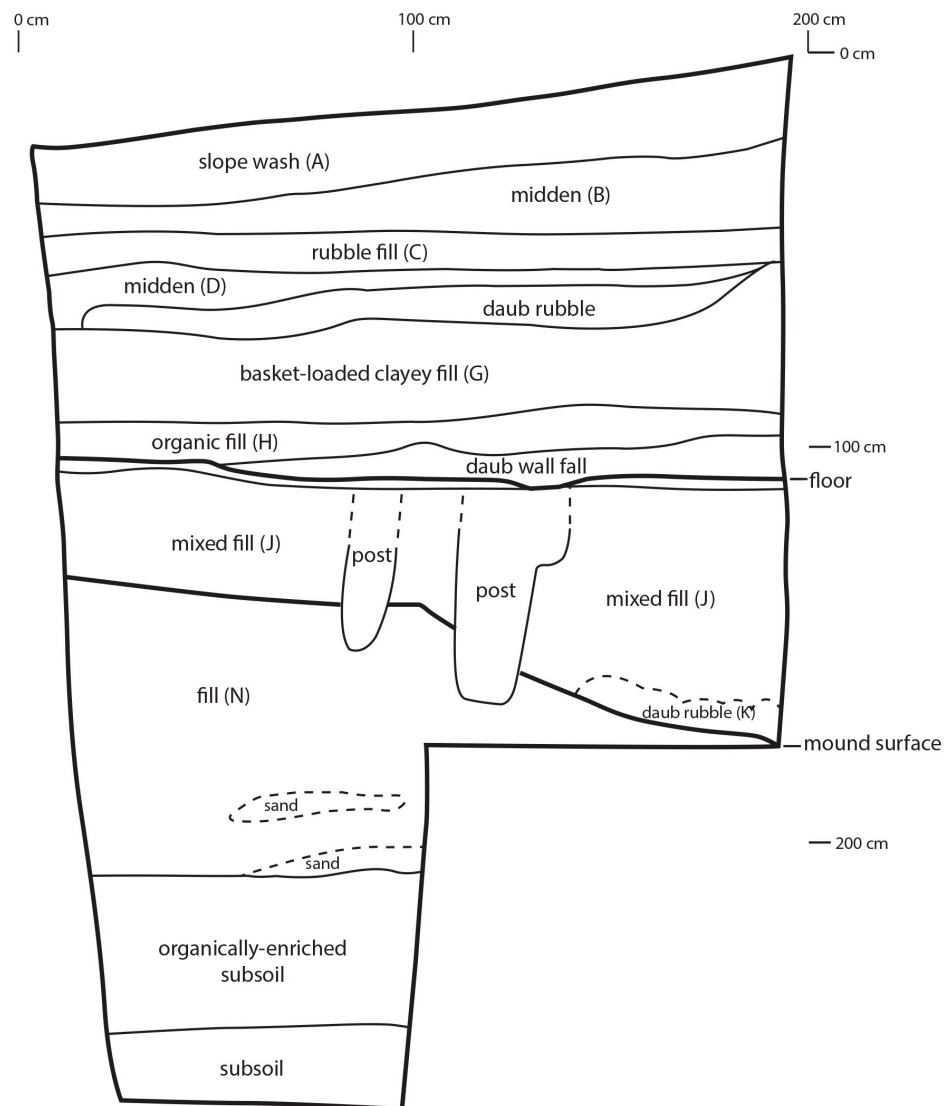


Figure 4.6. North profile wall of Mound E southwest slope trench, Parchman Place (22C0511).

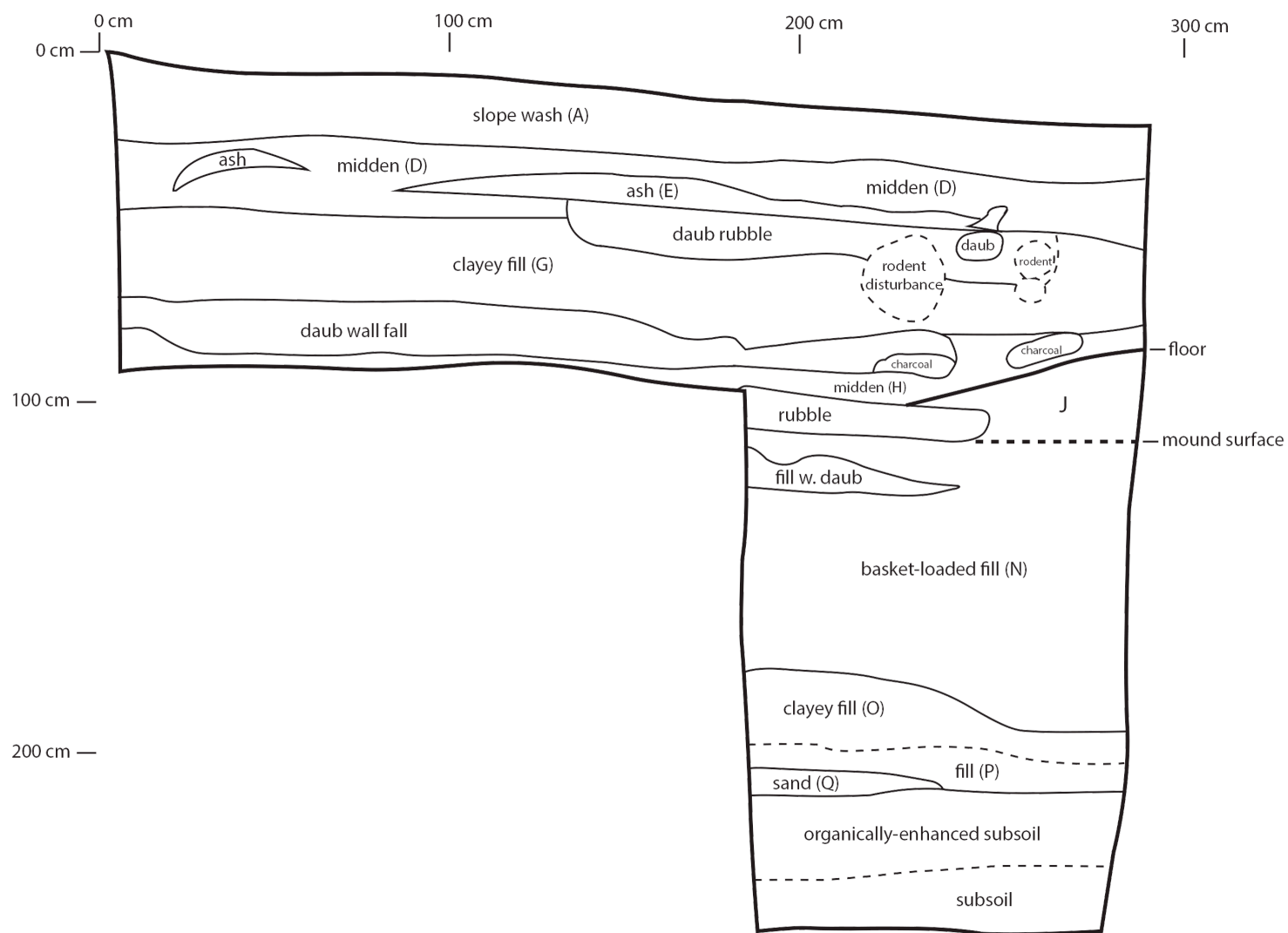


Figure 4.7. South profile wall of Mound E southwest slope trench, Parchman Place (22C0511).

excavation indicates that this subsoil gradually transitions to levee sand by approximately 50 cm below the excavation limits or 3 meters below the surface of the mound slope in this location. The top 20-30 cm of this natural soil horizon is organically enhanced and contains a small number of artifacts. The first stage of mound construction consists of about a meter of various fill zones distinguished by soil texture that terminate in a surface representing the original mound summit and a portion of its eastern slope. The first of these fill deposits is a thin zone of sand (Zone Q), followed by a more clayey fill zone (Zones O/P). The bulk of the deposit consists of basket-loaded clayey sand described in field notes as redeposited midden (Zone N), some small amount of which contains daub. The surface of this fill zone was an original mound surface. There are no structural remains evident in the form of posts or wall trenches, but the mound slope shows evidence of *in situ* burning and it has burned structural remains including charcoal (thatch?) and fired daub sitting directly on its surface (Zone K). Excavators also report mussel shell sitting on the mound surface. The excavation intersects what appears to be the eastern edge of the original platform as well as the upper portions of the eastern mound slope. If the daub and other burned material represent an *in situ* deposit or even if they were pushed over the edge of the mound after they were burned, then it is likely the excavation missed the location of a building located further to the west. An AMS sample of the burned material returned a date of cal 580  $\pm$  40 B.P. (Table 4.1), which should date the first episode of mound summit use in this location.

The mound and its slope were then capped by another substantial layer of mixed mound fill (J); this commences the second stage of mound construction. This fill was deposited while the mound surface was still hot, as evidenced by oxidation on either side of the interface. On top of this fill zone is a prepared floor surface (Figure 4.8), from which two lines of postholes



Figure 4.8. Fired floor located in Mound E southwest slope trench, Parchman Place (22CO511). Nahide Aydin excavates while Matt Reynolds and John Connaway look on. View South.

originate—one approximately N-S, the other approximately E-W. No mound slope is evident at this elevation. This and the fact that a structure floor is located here indicate that the area as well as the height of mound was substantially expanded during the second stage of construction. Like other buildings at Parchman, the stage 2 structure was swept out prior to its destruction by conflagration and there are no artifacts associated with its floor. The firing resulted in a hard surface of a bright orange-red color.

Directly on top of the floor there is thin deposit of sandy fill towards the west and fired daub wall fall in direct contact with the floor in the east. In a portion of the excavation block, excavators found burned roofing material sandwiched between the floor and the daub rubble. An AMS sample of this material returned a date of  $\text{cal } 500 \pm 38 \text{ B.P}$  (Table 4.1). Zone H, described as organically-enhanced sandy loam fill continues across the top of the wall fall in the east.

There is additional wall fall in the west on top of the sandy deposit (Zone H), with what is likely roofing material between the floor and the wall fall. There is also what is probably a charred post. Capping the destruction of this building is a layer of clean clayey mound fill (Zone G).

The next stage begins with a layer of daub rubble sitting on top of the surface created by this latest layer of mound fill. Just between the mound fill and the daub is a nearly complete flaring rim bowl with large rounded notches cut out of its rim (Figure 3.13). It also has linear incisions on the notched rim and the interior of the bowl is sooted. It is unclear whether the daub fall here is related to another burned structure on top of the second mound surface (there are no other indications of a structure) or whether it was brought from another location and used to fill in low spots on the surface. Next comes a thin layer of artifact-rich midden (Zone D), followed by a white ash or kaolin surface with distinct boundaries (Zone E), followed by more of the same type of midden (Zone D). Finally, there is more midden with large quantities of daub (Zone B), with the daub pieces decreasing in size as you get closer to the surface. The last deposit is slope wash with small pea-sized daub inclusions (Zone A).

The excavation encountered three (possibly four) stages of mound construction and two buried mound surfaces with associated structural remains. It has accordingly been divided into four analysis units for the purposes of artifact analysis (Table 1.1).

### *Mound E Summit Excavation*

An excavation trench consisting of seven 1 x 1 m units oriented roughly east-west was located on the summit of Mound E (Figure 4.1) and reached a depth of nearly three meters at its deepest point. The trench was placed in this location to intersect a large magnetic anomaly interpreted as a burned Mississippian structure as well as to determine the stratigraphic

relationship between Mounds E and A. Prior to the excavation, it was unknown whether Mound E should be considered as part of Mound A (e.g. as an “apron” or similar) or whether Mound E existed prior to the building of Mound A. The excavation was conducted in the summers of 2003 and 2004 by members of the University of Mississippi field school. The 2003 work was supervised by Pollyanna Held, then a graduate student at UM. I supervised the 2004 excavation and the Mound E summit excavation became the subject of my M.A. thesis, written under the direction of Jay Johnson (Stevens 2006).

Nine stages of mound construction were identified during excavation, as well as a truncation event that partially destroyed two stages and may have completely destroyed others. Six well-defined structure floors, as well as a seventh probable floor were found in association with mound surfaces (Figure 4.9). Well over 3 m of mound fill are known to exist beyond the deepest limits of excavation, and three additional floors have been located using down-hole magnetic susceptibility (Lowe and Fogel 2007a, 2007b), though these remain unexcavated. In the following section I describe the mound deposits and associated features from the bottom up.

The first mound construction stage begins with a series of mound fill zones ranging in texture from silt loam to sandy silt and containing daub and charcoal in varying degrees. These deposits culminate in the floor of Structure 6, the earliest of the summit structures uncovered in the excavation (Figure 4.9). This floor was fired hard as a result of the building having burned prior to abandonment. An unusual feature of the floor is the presence of a low berm on its eastern edge (Figure 4.10). Adjacent to the berm is an associated wall trench with mottled clayey fill that continues to cover the previously described fill zones to the east.

The second stage of mound construction evident in the trench excavation begins directly on top of the Structure 6 floor, with a thick layer of daub fall, representing the burning event that

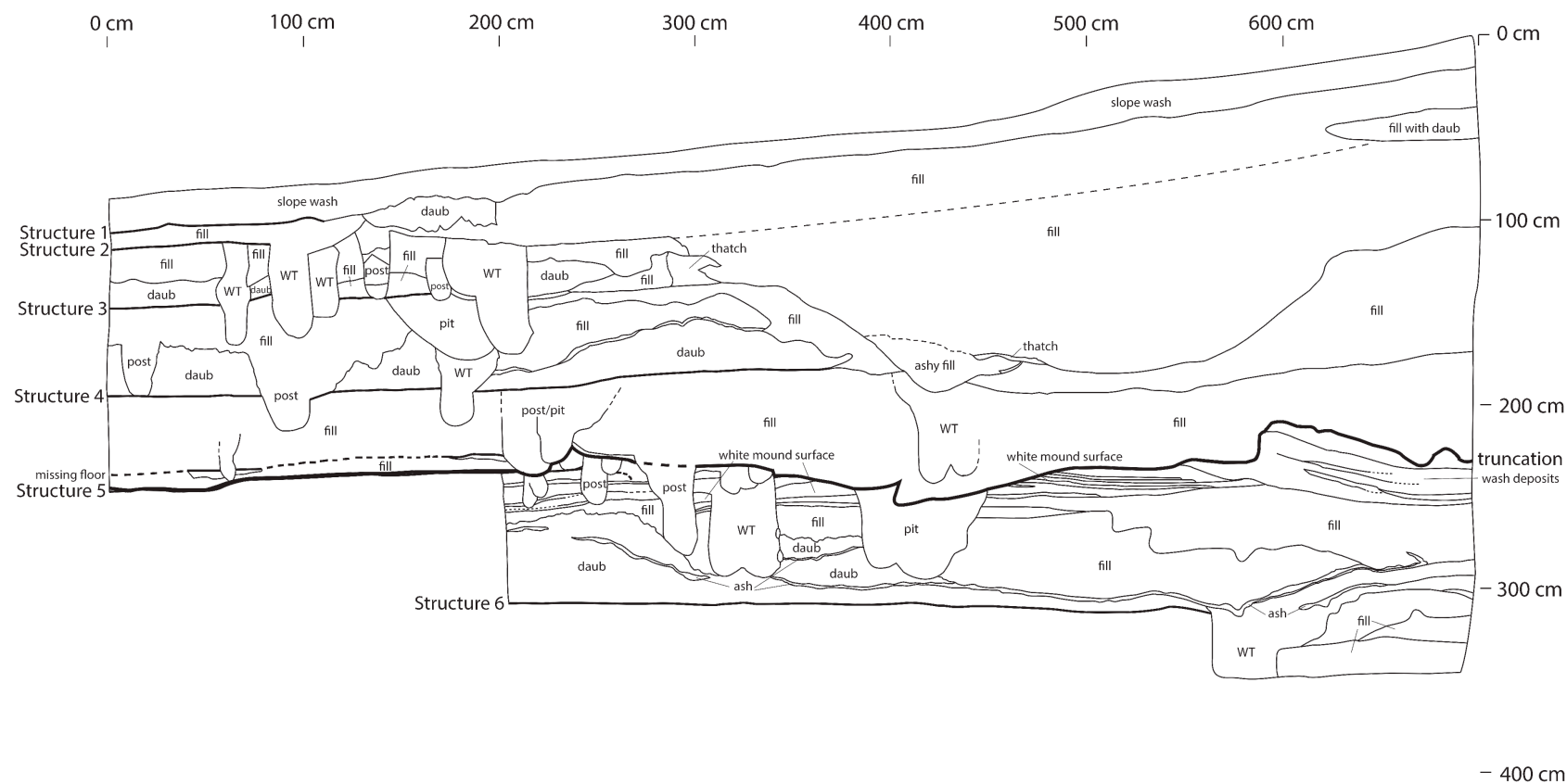


Figure 4.9. North profile wall of Mound E summit excavation at Parchman Place (22C0511).





Figure 4.10. Structure 6 floor with berm on eastern edge. From Mound E summit excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511). View east.

destroyed the building. This layer is approximately 50 cm thick at its deepest point, and contains within it a layer of fine ash that is thought to be the result of the burning of grass fill within the walls. A sample of burned thatch associated with Structure 6 returned a radiocarbon date of cal  $470 \pm 40$  B.P. (Table 4.1). The building remains were then covered over with a layer of fill, presumably while the structure was still smoldering, as evidenced by the oxidized nature of the soil in immediate contact with the daub rubble.



At this point, several materials, including kaolin, ash, and mussel shell, were used to construct a series of white mantles over the top of the newly purified mound. As each white layer became dingy as a result of mixing with dirt, it was covered over with a new white mantle, so that at least five white layers, as well as intermediate gray ones, are visible building up to a prepared surface upon which Structure 5 is built (Figure 4.11). These white mantles are associated with a deposit of broken ceramics, including a Bell Plain *var. Bell* bottle with a perforated base (Jay Johnson, personal communication 2013).

I believe the materials used to construct the white mound surfaces support the interpretation that they were intentional deposits related to renewal practices. The closest known source of kaolin is nearly 60 km away, near the present-day city of Batesville, Mississippi (Connaway, personal communication 2004). The distance required to transport the kaolin suggests that there is something significant about its use in the construction of the mound. Ash and shell may have had cosmological associations for Mississippian people (Lankford 2004; 2007). Like burning and burial, the color white has also been interpreted as symbolic of



Figure 4.11. Photos of white mound surface in Mound E summit excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).

purification and renewal (Hudson 1976:226), so the use of white substances is likely a continuation of the same theme represented by the burning and burial of Structure 6. These interpretations are further discussed in Chapter 6.

Floor 5, the final feature associated with the second mound construction stage, sits directly on top of the series of white mound surfaces. A double wall trench located at the eastern edge of the floor suggests that the structure was rebuilt. The floor itself is fired hard and like Structure 6, was burned. However, there is very little daub rubble on top of this floor, indicating that any wall fall might have been removed. Additionally, the floor of Structure 5 is riddled with holes, giving it a “torn up” appearance (Figure 4.12). Initially, the partial destruction of Floor 5 was a mystery. However, an explanation presented itself upon close inspection of the excavation profile, which indicates that a number of mound construction stages were almost completely removed in a truncation event that occurred sometime after the three mound construction stages just described were built and used.

That is, at some point after these (and possibly other) phases of construction, someone or some group of people at Parchman lopped off the top of the mound, leaving very few structural features including a single wall trench and three post molds with no visible points of origin. This makes mound construction stage 3 problematic in terms of interpretation. In addition to the wall trench and posts, a series of wash deposits to the far east of the profile, on top of the white mound deposits, slope up toward both the east and the west. These sloping wash deposits indicate a swale between two higher points. This is significant for two reasons. First, the fact that these deposits are located at a higher elevation (as much as 28 cm) than Floor 5 and that they slope up towards the west suggests that the truncation event destroyed a fairly large (although unknown) portion of the mound. It should be understood that Stage 3 may actually represent two



Figure 4.12. Photograph of Structure 5 floor from Mound E summit excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).

or more mound stages. It is also possible that additional stages were entirely removed during the truncation event and no longer exist in the mound stratigraphy. Second, the fact that the deposits also slope up toward the east suggests the presence of a second and separate mound located nearby to the east—presumably Mound A. The swale in the Mound E profile indicates that the two mounds were still separate at this point in the sequence.

The truncation itself was the next detectable event within the sequence of mound building. The interface of destruction is shown as a thick black line in Figure 4.9. From east to west, it truncates mound fill and slope wash belonging to construction stage 3, then the series of white layers belonging to construction stage 2, destroying all but the eastern mound slopes.

Following the profile across to the west, the truncation continues along the white mound, then cuts off the tops of several posts and a wall trench belonging to construction stage 3. The truncation continues along the white mound (stage 2) until it runs into Floor 5 (stage 2), then bumps along the top of it for the remainder of the excavation trench, tearing it up but not completely destroying it. Mound construction resumes subsequent to this destructive action.

The next construction stage (4) is not well represented. While not well defined, it consists of a relatively thin (18 cm at its thickest) deposit of mottled mound fill, which terminates in a flat, prepared mound surface. Small fragments of a possible floor remain intact in the western portion and can be seen on the north profile (Figure 4.9). A wall trench and pit that cut through the truncation are likely associated. This floor was not recognized during excavations and does not appear on plan maps. For this reason it was not given a structure number but will henceforth be referred to as the “missing floor.” It is difficult to say anything conclusive about this construction stage, as evidence for it is sparse. Only a few small fragments of a floor remain and there is no structural debris on top of it. It is possible that another truncation event occurred sometime after this stage, but as there is no supporting stratigraphic evidence, this is little more than conjecture.

All of the mound construction stages thus far—three prior to the truncation and one following it—were combined into Analysis Unit A for the purposes of artifact analysis. This construction is admittedly problematic as the time gap between stage 4 and the other three could be substantial. Unfortunately, it cannot be helped. The difficulties involved in excavating such a complicated stratigraphic sequence prevented excavators from distinguishing between construction phases at the time of excavation and the truncation was discovered only after the profile could be examined. Fortunately, construction stage four is quite shallow and contains

very little in the way of artifacts, so contamination of the pre-truncation mound stages should be minimal.

The fifth stage of mound construction begins when a thick layer of mound fill was laid down, ranging from approximately 40-60 cm thick, and including a posthole of unknown origins. This layer terminates at a flat platform or mound surface on which Structure 4 was built. This structure floor resembles Floor 6 in that it is fired extremely hard, is entirely intact, and has a small berm on its eastern edge. A wall trench with two visible posts is located at its eastern edge. Mapped in plan view as a single wall trench, in profile it appears to be two, indicating that structure 4 was rebuilt.

Stage 6 commences with the destruction of Structure 4, which results in a layer of burned daub and wall fall deposited directly on the surface of Floor 4 (Figure 4.13). Like the earlier deposit created by the burning of Structure 6, this daub also contains a thin layer of fine ash, this time running along the top of the daub fall. Two postholes appear to have been dug through the daub rubble, although it is unknown where either originates. A layer of mound fill was then placed over the top of the daub rubble, while the remains of the structure were still hot enough to cause oxidation and reduction. More mound fill was then added to form a prepared surface for Structure 3. The floor of Structure 3 is much like other floors, and shows evidence of burning although it is not fired quite so hard as Floors 6 and 4. The eastern boundary of Structure 3 is difficult to determine—its floor is not uniformly fired and no wall trenches can be conclusively associated with it. However, I suspect that the wall trench associated with floor 3 has been obscured by a pit-like feature that superimposes it. If this is the case, the eastern wall of structure 3 was located about 2 meters west of structure 4, the previous mound summit structure. This may indicate a trend, since Structure 4 itself is about 2 m west of Structure 6.





Figure 4.13. Photograph of Structure 4 floor from Mound E summit excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511). View northeast.

In turn, this may indicate a changing relationship between Mound E and Mound A to the east, both of which can be seen as part of Stage 6 in the profile. To the west the summit of Mound E rises approximately 55 cm above the swale between the two and culminates in Structure 3. To the east Mound A rises approximately 80 cm from the same low spot, although the limits of our excavation trench prevent determining its actual height. The footprint of Mound A here is larger than in any previous stage and is beginning to encroach on the area formerly occupied by Mound E.

Stage 7 of the sequence begins much like the others, with the burning of Structure 3. A

deposit of daub and ash directly on top of Floor 3 represents this event. In addition to deposits of daub on the surface, this event also resulted in the deposition of burned thatch from the structure's roof, a sample of which returned a radiocarbon date of  $390 \pm 40$  B.P. (Table 4.1). After the structure burned, borrowed soil was placed over the top of the burned remains, much like before, only this layer shows less evidence of burning than some of the others. This last activity is most apparent on the west mound, where Structure 3 was located. Additional mound fill to the east was also added at this time, although its exact boundaries remain undefined. A deposit of soil mixed with daub located at the eastern edge of the excavation trench indicates that the upper limits of this mound deposit might be just beneath it, however, this is not confirmed. What is clear is that there are no longer two distinct mounds at this point. Mound E is now completely subsumed by the western slope of Mound A, which eventually towers over the smaller mound. Finally, a surface was prepared for a new structure, and Structure 2 was built. Three separate wall trenches and at least two postholes are associated with Structure 2. While three wall trenches could represent rebuilds of the same structure, their sequence is unclear. They are located some distance from one another, indicating that the footprint of the building expanded or contracted over the course of its rebuilding.

There is no daub or wall fall covering Floor 2 so the eighth stage of construction begins with a relatively thin (approximately 6 cm in thickness) layer of soil placed over the top of Structure 2. Structure 1 was built on top of this thin prepared surface. The floor of Structure 1 is not as well fired as most of the other floors, and was difficult to identify during excavation. One posthole and one wall trench are associated with the final structure and visible in the north profile.

Finally, the ninth and final construction phase begins with the burning of Structure 1 and

the deposition of its wall fall on the surface of the mound outside the boundary of the building. The remains of Structure 1 were then buried with more soil, although it is difficult to tell exactly how much, as the mound surface has been disturbed by erosion and bioturbation. Mound stages 8 and 9 were not distinguished during excavation and have been combined for the purposes of artifact analysis (see below). Additionally, post and wall trench deposits associated with Floors 2 and 1 were difficult to separate during excavation, so it is possible that there has been some admixture with earlier deposits.

To sum up, nine stages of mound construction were positively identified in the excavation. All but the third stage, which was almost entirely destroyed by a truncation event, and the final stage, which represents the abandonment of the mound, had buildings on their summits that were swept clean at the end of their use life, as evidenced by the absence of ceramic and other artifacts in contact with their floor surfaces. The buildings were burned and then buried so quickly that in most cases the soil covering the fired structural remains was also fired to a bright orange color. Due to difficulties in separating contexts during excavation, the nine stages of mound construction identified in profile have been collapsed into five analysis units for the purpose of artifact analysis. The three mound stages prior to the truncation, as well as the one immediately following it make up Analysis Unit A. Mound fill deposited after the “missing floor” and adjacent truncation and prior to Structure 4 make up Analysis Unit B. Fill units between Structure 4 and Structure 3 make up Analysis Unit C. Those between Structures 3 and 2 as well as the mound expansion fill to the east make up Analysis Unit D. Finally, everything deposited after the destruction of Structure 2 is combined as Analysis Unit E. (see Table 1.1).



Subsequent to the excavations, three additional structure floors were identified beyond the excavation's limits using down-hole magnetic susceptibility, a geophysical technique that introduces a magnetic field, then measures how easily a given material can be magnetized. This analysis was conducted by Kelsey Lowe and Aaron Fogel; their results were presented in a paper given at the 2007 Mid-South Archaeological Conference (Lowe and Fogel 2007a) and a poster at the Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology (Lowe and Fogel 2007b).

After removing soil cores using a 2.5 cm Oakfield corer in a 5 x 7 m grid pattern, Lowe and Fogel took magnetic susceptibility readings for each core at 2 cm vertical increments using a Bartington MS2H Down-hole Susceptibility Meter. Figure 4.14 shows the location of their coring grid in relation to the magnetic gradiometer anomaly that prompted the Mound E summit excavations (Lowe and Fogel 2007b). After processing the raw data values and

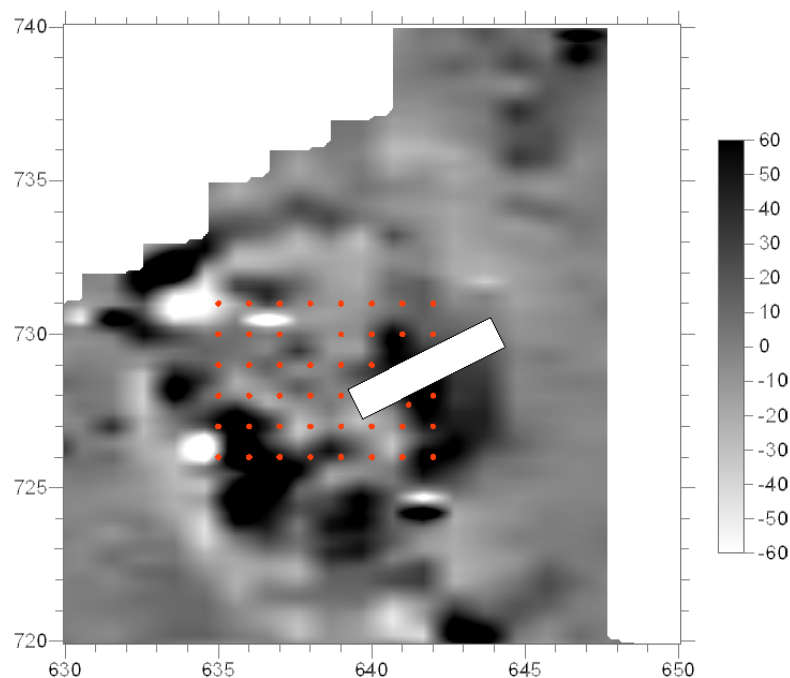


Figure 4.14. Magnetic anomaly on Mound E summit with location of excavation trench (in white) and coring grid for down-hole magnetic susceptibility (in red) (Lowe and Fogel 2007b).

comparing the results with coring and excavation data, Lowe and Fogel found that they could identify structure floors and living surfaces based on their high magnetic susceptibility signatures, while mound fill and ash had lower magnetic susceptibilities. In total, they identified 10 structure floors within their soil cores, including the six numbered floors and the “missing floor” encountered by the excavations described above. Three additional floor surfaces were discovered below the excavation limits. Profile and three dimensional oblique views of the 10 surfaces created by Lowe and Fogel are reproduced in Figure 4.15 (Lowe and Fogel 2007b).

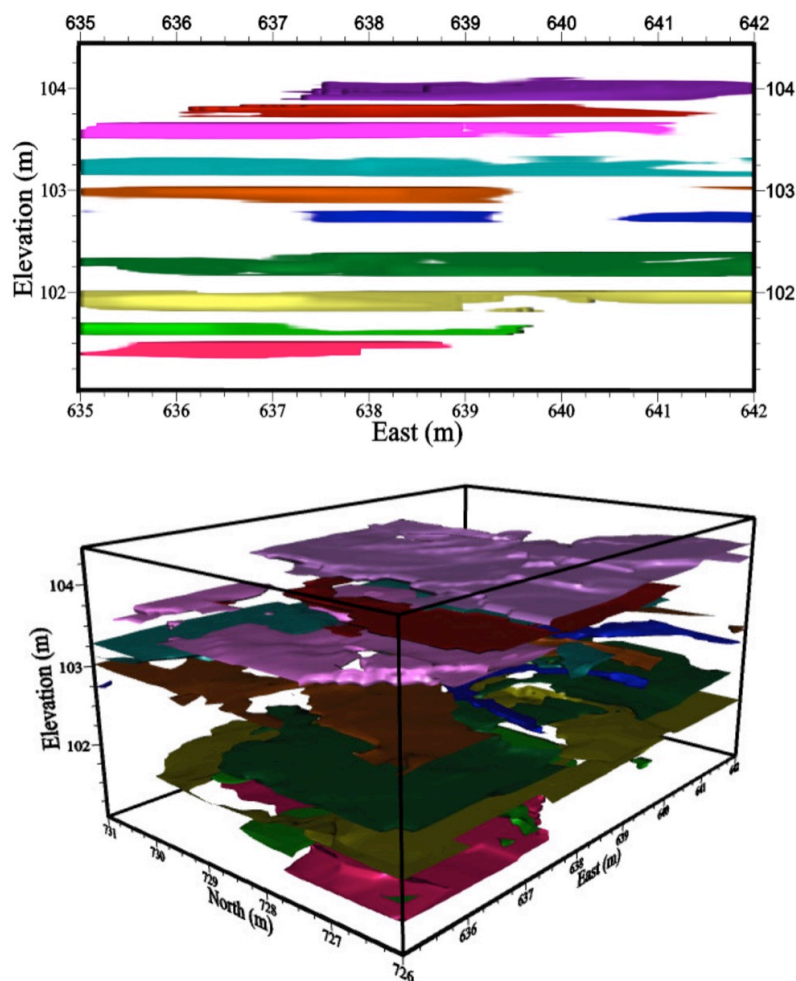


Figure 4.15. Down-hole magnetic susceptibility results showing profile (top) and oblique (bottom) views of 10 floors identified on the summit of Mound E at Parchman Place (22CO511) (Lowe and Fogel 2007b).

### *Mound D Excavation*

In the summer of 2010, a 2 x 2 m unit was excavated on Mound D (Figure 4.1) after coring revealed evidence of structural remains. The Mound D excavation was supervised by the author and excavated with the help of undergraduate volunteers from the Universities of Mississippi and North Carolina and John Connaway of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Though this excavation is shallow (about 60 cm at its deepest) in comparison to the other mound excavations, we discovered the remains of two Mississippian houses associated with the Mound D summit.

The earliest of the two structures uncovered by our excavations is represented by two wall trenches at right angles to one another, forming the northeast corner of a building (“Structure 2”). The wall trenches originate at a zone of burning that extends throughout most of the unit. This burned zone is fairly diffuse, consisting of very dark grey clay loam mottled with charcoal and daub. Though we do not have good evidence of a structure floor here, this burned zone likely represents the destruction of Structure 2 by fire, following the common practice of burning buildings at Parchman. In addition to the wall trenches, several posts are evident at this level, including at least one that pre-dates and four that post-date Structure 2. A number of posts cannot be correlated with any of the wall trench features. It is hard to know what to make of these mound summit posts, as they do not resolve into a recognizable pattern. Public architecture and domestic structures at Parchman all utilize wall trench construction, with posts often visible within the wall trenches. These single posts probably represent a different type of construction—perhaps some of them may relate to small structures or scaffolds that post-date the mound summit buildings. Alternatively, freestanding posts may have been erected periodically for some other purpose.

A third wall trench as well as at least four of the posts post-date Structure 2. The wall trench indicates that a second building (Structure 1) was located in approximately the same place as Structure 2, though lacking any other wall trenches it is impossible to say anything about its orientation. The Structure 1 wall trench was first observed as a linear feature filled with daub. We thought originally that it was a wall stub burned *in situ* within the trench, but upon excavation it turned out that the wall was removed/destroyed and then the trench was filled in with dirt and then fired daub (Figure 4.16). Additionally, several large sherds belonging to a Mississippi Plain pottery vessel were placed in the base of the trench before it was filled. The upper portion of the later wall trench is obscured by plowing and by the presence of the daub fill,



Figure 4.16. Photograph of Mound D summit excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511) showing Structure 1 wall trench filled with daub.

but it seems to originate only a few centimeters higher than those of Structure 2. Although I believe it most likely that two separate structures are represented here, I cannot rule out the possibility that the later wall trench represents a rebuild of the earlier building. An ashy deposit including persimmon seeds and nutshell is associated either with the second structure or possibly is later. A sample of burned hickory shell submitted for AMS dating returned a date of  $478 \pm 38$  B.P. (Table 4.1).

Other notable features from the Mound D summit excavations include three burned intact posts very near the surface. These posts may suggest that the original height of Mound D has been reduced—likely from several years in cultivation (when recorded by the LMS in 1940, Mound D was 1.5 meters tall at its highest point [Steponaitis et al. 2002]). One of the burned posts superimposes the latest wall trench, so I believe at least three episodes of construction are represented here, though it is possible that the burned posts represent a historic intrusion. If they are prehistoric, however, then three episodes of construction are evident, rather than two. All construction stages revealed by the Mound D excavations have been combined into a single analysis unit (A) for the purposes of artifact analysis.

### *Mound D Coring*

In June of 2011, Rachel Stout-Evans, a soil scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and I used a truck-mounted Giddings hydraulic corer to test the nature and extent of Mound D (Figure 4.17). In 1940, the LMS recorded Mound D as rising 1.5 m above the ground surface at its northern extent and approximately 60 cm above the surrounding ground surface to the south (Steponaitis et al. 2002). However, prior to the coring,





Figure 4.17. Rachel Stout-Evans, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil scientist, coring Mound D at Parchman Place (22CO511). View north.

there was still some uncertainty as to whether Mound D was an aboriginal construction or alternatively a natural rise or levee remnant that the people of Parchman then incorporated into the site. However, coring shows that there is mound fill extending for over 3 m from the present mound surface (Stout-Evans 2011b). At 3 m 28 cm the core encountered a well-defined clay surface that caps the natural levee sands below it (Figure 4.18). Following this clay cap, Stout-Evans identified eight cultural soil horizons consisting of redeposited soils related to the Dubbs, Forestdale, and Dundee subsoil formations. The earliest four horizons consist of approximately 1 m 3 cm of fill ranging from silt loam to very fine sandy loam related to the Dubbs formation. There are no cultural material inclusions evident at this depth. Following this is a 25 cm deposit of silty clay related to the Dundee and Forestdale formations, which probably acts as a stabilizing





Figure 4.18. Clay surface encountered at 3 m 28 cm in Mound D core at Parchman Place (22CO511).

feature within the mound (see Sherwood and Kidder 2011). Forestdale formation soils came from the earlier of the two natural levees upon which Parchman was built and were likely procured specifically for this purpose. Following the clay cap is roughly 1 m 30 cm of fill Stout-Evans identified as three horizons of loam and silty clay loam soils related to the Dubbs and Dundee formations. The surface of these deposits culminate at the fired floor identified during excavations as Structure 2 at 38 cm below the current mound surface. No other architectural features were found. In fact, the mound fill is remarkably sterile, though Stout-Evans noted organic staining and clay films on the ped surfaces of soils located above the stabilizing clayey fill layer. Although I cannot rule out the possibility that additional structures are present within

Mound D in locations not sampled by the core, it seems that the mound was constructed quickly and that the two (possibly three) summit structures discussed above are the only ones present.

### *Mound B Salvage Work*

According to LMS surveyors in 1940, Mound B (Figure 4.1) was once a rectangular platform mound two meters tall (Steponaitis et al. 2002). However, its height and shape have been altered since that time. John Connaway (1985:2) reports that a backhoe removing fill dirt damaged the southeast edge of the mound in June of 1984. Sometime prior to that, a bulldozer had been used to remove a portion of the mound summit. During the 1984 demolition Connaway noted evidence of a burned structure located on a mound surface approximately one meter above the base of the mound. The material included a distinct layer of burned thatch with a thick layer of white ash on top of it. A sample of the burned thatch returned a radiocarbon date of  $340 \pm 95$  B.P., an unexpectedly late result for Parchman (Table 4.1). No other investigations have been conducted in Mound B.

### *Mound C Coring*

In the summer of 2011, Rachel Stout-Evans and I extracted two core samples from Mound C (Figure 4.1) using a truck-mounted Giddings soil-coring rig owned by the NRCS. Located on the edge of the same natural levee terrace as Mounds A and E, Mound C was originally recorded by the LMS as rising slightly more than 2 m above the remnant channel to the northwest and 1 m above the levee itself to the southeast (Steponaitis et al. 2002). As with Mound D, it was unclear prior to the coring if Mound C was a natural or constructed feature—the coring confirmed that Mound C was indeed cultural in origin. As the two cores revealed



similar mound profiles, only one was recorded in detail (Stout-Evans 2011b). The recorded Mound C core reached a depth of 3 m 20 cm from the current mound surface and encountered natural levee sands at approximately 2 m 30 cm, a height pretty well in accordance with the LMS report.

At the base of the mound, the core encountered a thin buried A horizon containing an abundance of daub, suggesting that a building may have been located here prior to the construction of the mound. Above the buried A, 1 m 40 cm of mound fill was deposited. Within this deposit, Stout-Evans identified two horizons consisting of fine and very fine sandy loam related to the Dubbs subsoil formation; the bottom 5 cm or so of these deposits also contained small quantities of daub. Capping this deposit is a 30 cm thick mantle of silty clay soil related to the Forestdale formation. The clayey Forestdale subsoil consists of backswamp deposits from the earlier of the two levee formations on which Parchman was built and which had not flooded regularly for some time. It was likely procured and used for mound stabilization purposes (see Sherwood and Kidder 2011). Following the clay cap, another 30-40 cm of mound fill was deposited, this time silt loam and silty clay loam related to the Dundee formation. These deposits culminate in a fired floor surface located at a depth of 33 cm below the surface. The fill immediately underneath the floor exhibited both oxidation and reduction in the signature pattern of burned structures at Parchman. This was the only direct evidence of building on Mound C. However, ash, charcoal, and daub occur in small quantities in many of the fill zones.

Overall, the similarities between Mounds C and D are striking. Both mounds are relatively modest in size and (at least currently) more conical in appearance than the other mounds at Parchman, though this latter circumstance may be due to historic agricultural disturbance (LMS archaeologists recorded Mound C as a rounded oval and Mound D as a more

or less square platform). Both mounds were built using alternating layers of silty/sandy and clayey soils. The presence of a thick stabilizing layer of clayey Forestdale-like soil within each mound suggests that their construction followed similar engineering conventions. Finally, both mounds appear to have been built quickly and with the exception of the structural debris (daub) located underneath the first construction stage of Mound C, neither mound has evidence of structures prior to the ones at or near their current summits.

### Mound Building at Parchman

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.19 present radiocarbon dates for mound contexts at Parchman. These as well as the stratigraphic excavations already presented will be the basis for the following discussion summarizing the history of mound building at Parchman.

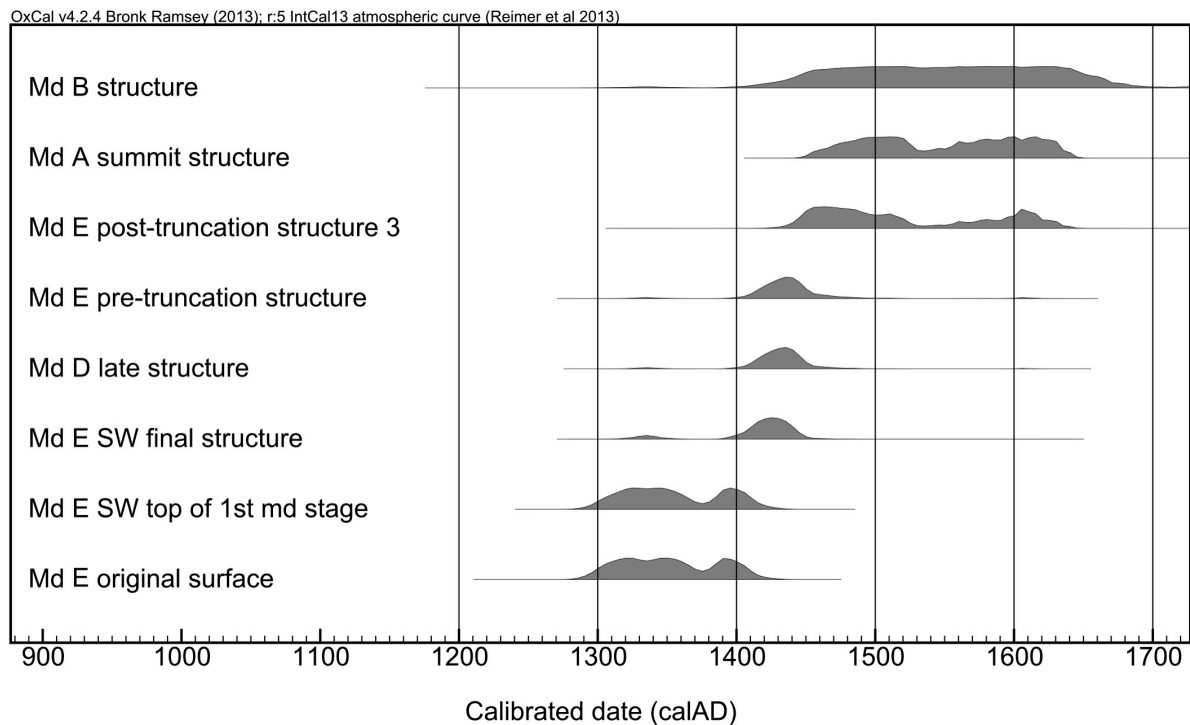


Figure 4.19. Calibrated radiocarbon dates for mound contexts from Parchman Place (22CO511) with 1σ date ranges displayed.

The earliest dates from mound building correspond to the initial construction stages of Mound E, and given these early dates, I believe mound building was happening from the very beginning of Parchman's settlement. Unfortunately, dates are unavailable for early stages of Mounds A, B, C, and D. Given the spatial relationship between Mounds E and A, I suspect that initiation of their construction was concurrent and coincided with the founding of the Parchman community. I also suspect that Mound B was a contemporary of A and E despite a rather late radiocarbon date from an intermediate mound surface. From what we know, Mound B was constructed in a manner similar to that of A and E, that is, in multiple stages with buildings located on intermediate summits. Mounds C and D, however, were constructed in relatively few stages and had no intermediate surfaces exposed for any length of time. The only structural remains associated with either mound were located on the summits. Given the 15<sup>th</sup> century date associated with summit architecture on Mound D and their apparently rapid construction, I am tempted to consider Mounds C and D as later constructions than the initial stages of Mounds A, E, and possibly B. However, Mounds A and E were occupied the longest, as dates associated with their summits extend into the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

While we have ending dates for Mound A, our best evidence for mound building practices at Parchman come from Mound E—between deep trenches at the base, on the southwest slope, and on the summit of Mound E, there is evidence of a nearly complete mound building sequence, including at least 12 construction stages. Within this sequence, I have identified a number of distinct mound building practices that are relevant for understanding the mound stratigraphy in terms of the social processes that went into its building (McAnany and Hodder 2009). These include: (1) founding events, (2) mantle construction, (3) building and dismantling of summit structures, (4) veneering, (5)

truncation, (6) incorporation, and (7) abandonment, each of which tells us something about the social relationships among people involved in the building.

Of these mound building practices, we can make a distinction between those associated with “mound building as usual,” and those that represent departures from the more usual pattern. Mantle construction and the building and dismantling of summit structures fall into the first category, while veneering, truncation, incorporation, and abandonment fall into the second. Founding events may be considered somewhere in between, in that they are a necessary first step in the mound building process, but they do not seem to be repeated throughout the mound’s history.

### *Founding Events*

Founding events associated with mound building at Parchman include feasting or community eating events that included preparation and serving of large amounts of food, preparation of food in non-typical ways, and serving of rare, valuable, or perishable foods, condiments, or other substances. Early contexts from both the Mound E base and Mound E southwest slope excavations were associated with serving assemblages that differ from the more typical domestic assemblages found elsewhere (see discussion in Chapter 3). Furthermore, there is evidence that multiple segments of the Parchman community took part in these founding feasts. While the serving assemblage in the Mound E southwest slope excavation was associated with very small plain coarse ware bowls for serving rare or valuable foods, the Mound E base serving assemblage had small carinated and restricted bowls to serve the same purpose. I argued in Chapter 3 that these bowls indicate a status- or kin-based relationship with non-local Mississippian groups.

Here I emphasize that the social distinctions made by having or not having fine pottery of distant manufacture suggests that socially-distinct segments of the Parchman community took part in feasting events related to the founding of the mound (and consequently, the town).

In addition to the ceramic serving assemblage, the first stage of Mound E was associated with the burial of a cremated, bundled adult male that was incorporated into the initial mound fill stage either as it was deposited or sometime after. The burial was then covered in a thick layer of ash before another layer of fill was added, which culminated in the first raised living surface of Mound E. Burials of any kind are exceedingly rare at Parchman, and given that mound building commenced as soon as people moved to this location, it is likely that the remains of the individual buried in the first mound construction stage were transported here from some other location. This individual may have been an important person whose physical presence at the foundation of a mound would lend legitimacy to the new town and its members.

### *Mound Building as Usual*

Following these founding events, mound builders at Parchman generally followed a standard pattern of building that included mantle construction and the building and dismantling of summit structures. First, they constructed a mantle that served as a platform for a large residential building. Some mantles were constructed using redeposited midden from nearby locations; others were constructed of particular sediments chosen for their desired engineering properties. Summit buildings were wall trench structures made of wattle and daub with thatched roofs. Each building would have been used for some length of time, presumably by a leader of

the lineage or house group associated with the mound. When the building reached the end of its use life, they swept it clean of artifacts and then burned it, typically in a manner that ensured the preservation of large amounts of structural material in the form of fired or vitrified wall daub and sometimes carbonized wall posts, ceiling beams, and/or roofing material or thatch. In most cases the recently destroyed structures were immediately buried in a layer of mound fill while the building remains were still hot enough to cause oxidation and/or reduction. These mound fill episodes were relatively thick and apparently had a dual purpose—the first to bury the smoldering remains of previous structures, the second to create a level platform upon which the next structure would be built. This basic sequence of events was repeated over and over during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the early part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, this pattern is well documented for Mississippian sites more broadly and is frequently interpreted as a manifestation of the succession of leaders (e.g. Anderson 1994).

#### *Exceptions to Mound Building as Usual*

Sometime during the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there is evidence for a number of mound building practices that do not follow the standard pattern of mantle construction followed by the building and destruction of summit architecture followed immediately by mantle construction, etc. These practices did not stop, but rather became punctuated and perhaps disrupted by other mound building practices, including veneering, truncation, and the physical incorporation of one mound by another.

*Veneering.* The first of these is the addition of a white veneer composed of ash, crushed mussel shell, and kaolin (a fine silty clay that is white in color) to a mound summit exposed in the Mound E summit excavation. In some places, it appears that the materials making up this

deposit were mixed prior to their deposition, a preparation described by Sherwood and Kidder (2011:74). Though similar in appearance to a “zoned fill” (Sherwood and Kidder 2011:78), I believe it is different in that each layer should be understood as an individual event within a sequence, rather than as constituent parts of a single fill zone. There is evidence for at least five (and probably more) white layers, with intermediate gray layers in between the pure white ones. As each surface became dirty, then, it was continually renewed by adding additional layers of the white substances. This indicates that the white mound surface was maintained for a period of time before a new structure was built on its surface, in contrast to the previous practice, where new structures were built immediately after the burial of old ones.

*Truncation.* Following a period of maintenance of the white mound surface, at least two stages of Mound E were built in the standard manner, with each mantle supporting summit architecture that was constructed and deconstructed according to the common practice. Stratigraphy from the Mound E summit trench also suggests that Mounds A and E were separate at this time and presumably of comparable size. Following these construction stages, Mound E was truncated. That is, someone or some group of people completely removed an unknown quantity of fill from the top of the mound, all the way down to the white veneer and adjacent floor, but no further. Recall that the floor of Structure 5, built on top of the veneer, was unusual in that any daub or structural remains associated with it were removed and that the floor itself exhibits many holes and other evidence of rough treatment. Wash deposits from the swale between Mounds A and B as well as posts and wall trenches associated with two buildings that post-date Structure 5 were also truncated. Given that the truncation extended to the veneered surface and no further, I consider these two unusual acts of mound building to be related. That is,

the people responsible for the truncation intentionally exposed the veneered surface in order to reference the meanings and circumstances associated with its creation.

*Incorporation.* Following the truncation of Mound E in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, mound building resumed in the standard established pattern of a mound fill layer, followed by a summit structure that was destroyed and then buried. The sequence is repeated at least four times before the mound was abandoned, probably in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century. These final construction episodes represent a return to the standard mound building practices previously noted, with two exceptions. First, the physical relationship between Mounds E and A changes, beginning when fill from Mound A encroaches on the space formerly occupied by Mound E. This spatial encroachment continues with the next stage of construction, when the swale separating the two mounds is completely filled in. Essentially, it appears that a portion of Mound E was incorporated into the now much larger Mound A, a physical relationship that continues for the rest of the site's occupation.

Second, though mantle construction and use of the Mound E summit continued after its incorporation into the Mound A side slope, the mantles themselves are substantially thinner than previous ones. This indicates that late in the Mound E sequence less effort was put into increasing the height of the mound. It is possible that those responsible for the construction of Mound E were less able than before to marshal the labor required to build substantial mound layers. It is also possible that it was simply less important to do so for some other reason. In any case, Mound E remained essentially the same height after its incorporation into Mound A. Conversely, the height of Mound A was increased substantially and rapidly after this act of incorporation, ultimately resulting in an earthen monument that towers over all other mounds at the site. It is unknown if Mound A continued to be built in punctuated increments with multiple



intermediate surfaces, or alternatively, if the remaining bulk of the mound was raised in one go. We do have evidence for two sequential buildings located on Mound A's ultimate summit, and given the late date associated with one of them, the latter scenario seems likely.

*Abandonment.* If we accept that mounds at Parchman are affiliated with corporate groups of one kind or another and that mound size is related to the relative importance of such groups, then the scenario described above indicates a change from social relations where mound-affiliated groups are seemingly equal to a situation where one group claims a higher status relative to others. The takeaway from this scenario, in my view, is not that increasing hierarchy is an inevitable trajectory of Mississippian societies, but rather that there is potential for social elements represented by mounds to be ranked in various ways (Crumley 1995, 2005) and that mound building was a means of negotiating these relationships. As the dramatic expansion of Mound A happened in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century and the site was abandoned soon after, the increasingly hierarchical social relations implied by the changing physical relationship between the mounds was not in effect for very long.

In summary, mound building commenced at Parchman during the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Parchman I sub-phase) in concert with the initial occupation of the site. The founding of the Parchman community thus involved the founding of new mounds, which, in turn, involved feasting on the part of multiple, socially distinct segments of the community. The burial of a bundled individual in the first mound stage may also have been a critical founding event. Following the initiation of mound building, construction of Mound E (and presumably Mounds A and B) involved repeating a sequence of mantle construction followed by the building, use, and destruction of summit structures. This sequence continued throughout the late 14<sup>th</sup> century and into the 15<sup>th</sup> (Parchman II sub-phase). About the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, this pattern was

punctuated by some unusual mound building practices, including the construction of a white veneer on Mound E's surface and the truncation of several mound construction stages in order to re-expose it. Late in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a single mound (Mound A) was rapidly and dramatically expanded, in essence incorporating a large portion of the adjacent Mound E and coming to physically dominate the site layout. Finally, the mounds were abandoned in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **NEIGHBORHOODS IN SPACE AND TIME**

In this chapter, I focus on investigations in the off-mound areas of Parchman, with special attention to the results of near-surface geophysical survey and stratigraphic excavations in residential areas of the site. I also discuss controlled surface collections covering the entirety of the site as well as targeted coring activities. Taken together, these investigations plus existing site maps produced much information regarding the physical layout of the site. Excavations in several residential areas provided additional information regarding the nature of domestic structures and the duration of occupation in various areas. I use this information to reconstruct an occupational history for Parchman and to make some inferences about the community that resided here at various scales of analysis, both spatial and temporal. The following sections summarize trends in the literature that I found especially helpful in framing my interpretations.

#### *Community Studies and Spatial Analysis: A Recap*

As I discussed in detail in Chapter 1, I follow many others in considering past communities as dynamic forms of social organization that are continually constructed through various forms of practice (Barth 1969; Bourdieu 1977; Canuto and Yaeger 2000; Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Giddens 1979, 1984; Harris 2013; Jones 1997; Lucy 2005; Marcus 2000; Pauketat 2007; Vermeulen & Govers 1994). Significantly, daily practice is structured by historical

conditions and existing social structures. In turn, those conditions and structures are impacted by practice. Communities are both multi-scalar and multi-axial in the sense that membership in different community formations is based on varying criteria, and that individuals can simultaneously participate in multiple communities operating at different scales. Since communities can exist at multiple spatial scales, it is necessary to specify the scale at which any given investigation is focused. For the purposes of this chapter, I follow Canuto and Yeager (2000) in considering the nature of communities as scaled between the level of the household and the polity.

Since I choose to focus here on local scales of analysis, we can add additional criteria to the working definition of community, namely, that community-building is based on *shared* practice in the form of frequent, if not daily, interaction. Furthermore, shared practice is necessarily tied to place, landscape, and social use of space, in addition to other forms of material culture and practice. Finally, different forms of practice leave different material traces in the archaeological record, and can therefore lead us to different and sometimes contradictory interpretations of how people expressed community and communal identities.

Much recent work underlines the importance of spatial practice in community building. Mehrer (2000: 45) tells us that “[pa]tterned layouts in the size, shape, and proximity among houses, pits, courtyards, and other elements of the built environment can be understood as generalized expressions of the prevailing social order.” Knight (1998) provides a well-known Mississippian example from Moundville, where he interprets the site layout as a map or “sociogram” materializing social relations among the main corporate kin groups making up Moundville society in the 13th century (see also Wilson 2008 and Knight 2010, 2016 for updates on this general interpretation).

While monumental landscapes such as the mound and plaza complexes of the Mississippi period remain the most visible of spatial archaeological remains, near surface remote sensing and geophysical survey techniques can reveal buried archaeological features, expanding our spatial knowledge of sites and regions by leaps and bounds. Recently, geophysical applications have been productively combined with principles of landscape archaeology to consider such questions as how human groups have interacted with the broader landscape (Kvamme 2003), how cultural ideas about the use of space have persisted (or not) over time (Thompson et al. 2011), and how past societies were organized socially (Conyers 2010; Conyers and Leckebusch 2010). In line with landscape approaches in archaeology (Ashmore and Knapp 1999; David and Thomas 2008; Snead et al. 2009), these studies recognize that geophysical methods are well suited to identifying not only built features such as domestic or monumental architecture, but also the negative spaces defined by the built environment (see also articles in a recent special issue of *Archaeological Prospection* edited by Thompson [2014]).

This recognition of the importance of “empty” space in structuring social interactions is perhaps foreshadowed in the southeastern United States by the work of Dalan *et. al* (2003), Kidder (2004), and others who have considered the organizing nature of plazas. Kidder (2004:515), for instance, argues that plazas should not be thought of as “empty spaces that developed because architecture enclosed an open area... but rather as one of the central design elements of community planning and intra-site spatial organization.” Taking this observation as a starting point, we can think about the spaces between built architecture, buried or otherwise, as an important dataset for exploring social interaction in past communities, especially when considered alongside ethnohistoric accounts of how such spaces were used by historic period Indian people (Nelson 2014). Plazas, for instance, have a multitude of functions that have been

documented archaeologically and ethnographically (Rogers et al. 1982). They are commonly regarded as a source of corporate identity—areas for inclusive ritual, games, and other social interactions (Kidder 2004; Mehrer and Collins 1995:37). On the other hand, plazas are also forums for displaying social position (Kidder 2004:528), as many site layouts are designed so that the activities taking place on mound summits can be viewed from the plaza. Thus, we know that in North America, particular types of empty spaces were not only socially meaningful, but that they could encode various meanings simultaneously.

This observation is in line with the way Smith (2008; see also Robin 2002) has theorized empty space. Smith considers “emptiness” to be a potent cultural category, one that can lead us to especially fruitful lines of anthropological inquiry, precisely because empty spaces can be flexible in their use. Built constructions such as houses, community buildings, and monumental architecture are typically constructed with one or more purposes in mind. Though their functions and meanings may be contested or may change over time, the physical durability of buildings means that their use is constrained and therefore relatively inflexible. Empty spaces, on the other hand, may be “created as permanent zones in which construction is inhibited,” or they may be the “temporary or unintended results of destruction, clearing, or abandonment (Smith 2008:217).” Either way, empty spaces are less constrained in terms of the variety of uses and activities that may happen either simultaneously or sequentially. Additionally, empty spaces may be more ambiguous in terms of who oversees their use. As a result, they hold much potential for the social negotiation of appropriate use of space, resulting in ongoing opportunities for conflict and consensus-building among community members.

### *Social Organization and Belief Systems*

While flexibility may be one aspect of spatial and material practice, the actions of individuals and groups always take place within particular local and historical circumstances. When considering the possibilities for understanding these circumstances, we can look to ethnographically documented accounts of the social organization and belief systems of historic period southeastern Indian groups, some of which I reviewed in Chapter 1. These include principles of kin-based social organization, such as matrilineal descent, matrilineal residence, and clan and moiety structures. Cross-cultural comparisons of Southeastern, and particularly Muskogean, people indicate that they shared similar patterns of residence at the local level, including membership in house groups and towns. These organizing structures are of particular relevance to this chapter in that they can be used as analogs to aid us in understanding how people living at Parchman may have practiced community making at the local level. In addition to shared practice related to daily patterns of living, community members also shared in ceremonial practices that situated their local communities in relation to the broader Mississippian world.

Relying primarily on spatial data evident in the results of geophysical survey, I draw a parallel between discrete residential neighborhoods at Parchman and the “house societies” or “house-groups” of the Chickasaw and Choctaw (Brightman and Wallace 2004; Galloway and Kidwell 2004; Knight 2010; Speck 1907; Swanton 1928a; 1931a; Urban and Jackson 2004). Historically, these house groups were composed primarily of women and children related through the clan system, as well as unmarried male relatives and in-married males belonging to other clans. These groups of clan-related people typically shared physical spaces such as houses and the areas surrounding them as well as agricultural fields. They also shared intangible

property such as naming customs and hunting territories, and were thought to share particular characteristics of personality and custom. House groups were autonomous decision-making units at the local level, operating independently of the clan structure, and thus a salient form of community in their own right.

Historic period native towns also shared similar organizing principles with one another and were typically composed of multiple house groups (Ethridge 2003; Galloway and Kidwell 2004; Knight 1994; Swanton 1946). These towns were also autonomous, considered by Urban and Jackson (2004:703) to be the “minimally self-sufficient units of Muskogean social organization.” Their physical manifestations include shared ceremonial facilities, though shared ceremonial *practice* rather than any physical manifestation was perhaps the defining feature of towns (Scarry and Steponaitis 2016). Town members additionally shared a ceremonial fire and people of the same town were referred to as being of the same “fire.” As with the lineages or house groups discussed above, towns represent localized manifestations of the principle organizing social structures of southeastern Indian groups and are thus relevant for studying the community of people that resided at Parchman just prior to Spanish contact.

I also reviewed Native understandings of the Mississippian cosmos in Chapter 1, and in Chapter 4, I presented evidence that members of the Parchman community incorporated substances with culturally-meaningful associations such as ash, shell, and clay in mounds in order to invoke ideas related to the Mississippian cosmos. Mound building, however, was not the only forum for materializing these and related ideals.

Archaeological evidence (presented below) at Parchman suggests that the handling and disposal of fire and its residues (including ash and carbonized food remains) was also an important communal undertaking. A multi-layered metaphor, fire can be both sacred and



polluting. Fire itself references the Sun, and its Above World location. Smoke, the byproduct of fire, has the ability to connect this world with the upper world in the form of an *axis mundi*. “Fire” also refers simultaneously to the household, to the community (in the sense of *talwa* or town), and to relationships between communities. As such, fire was at the center of social relations at every level of existence from the household to the cosmos. Maintaining the fire was a significant way of renewing the balance of the world and the social relations that exist within it. Significantly, maintenance of the fire required periodic renewal, including prescribed ways of disposing of the old fire, a practice that in some cases may be visible archaeologically. This practice may, in fact, be one way the people of Parchman renewed and renegotiated social relationships within their neighborhoods and towns.

I turn now to a summary of archaeological work conducted in off-mound areas of the site, including a short summary of early work followed by detailed descriptions of the results of recent geophysical survey, surface collections, mapping and GIS reconstruction, and excavations.

### **Early Mapping and Surface Collection**

Ford and Griffin’s 1940 map (Figure 5.1) is the most accurate of the early Parchman maps and contains much information relevant to reconstructing the physical layout of the site. In addition to the site’s five “platform” mounds (discussed in Chapter 4), the LMS map depicts eight small rises or “house mounds,” ranging from .3 m to 2 m in height. Six of the eight are located along the perimeter of a large plaza area, defining its boundaries to the east, south, and west. The remaining two are located away from the plaza, one between Mounds B and D in the

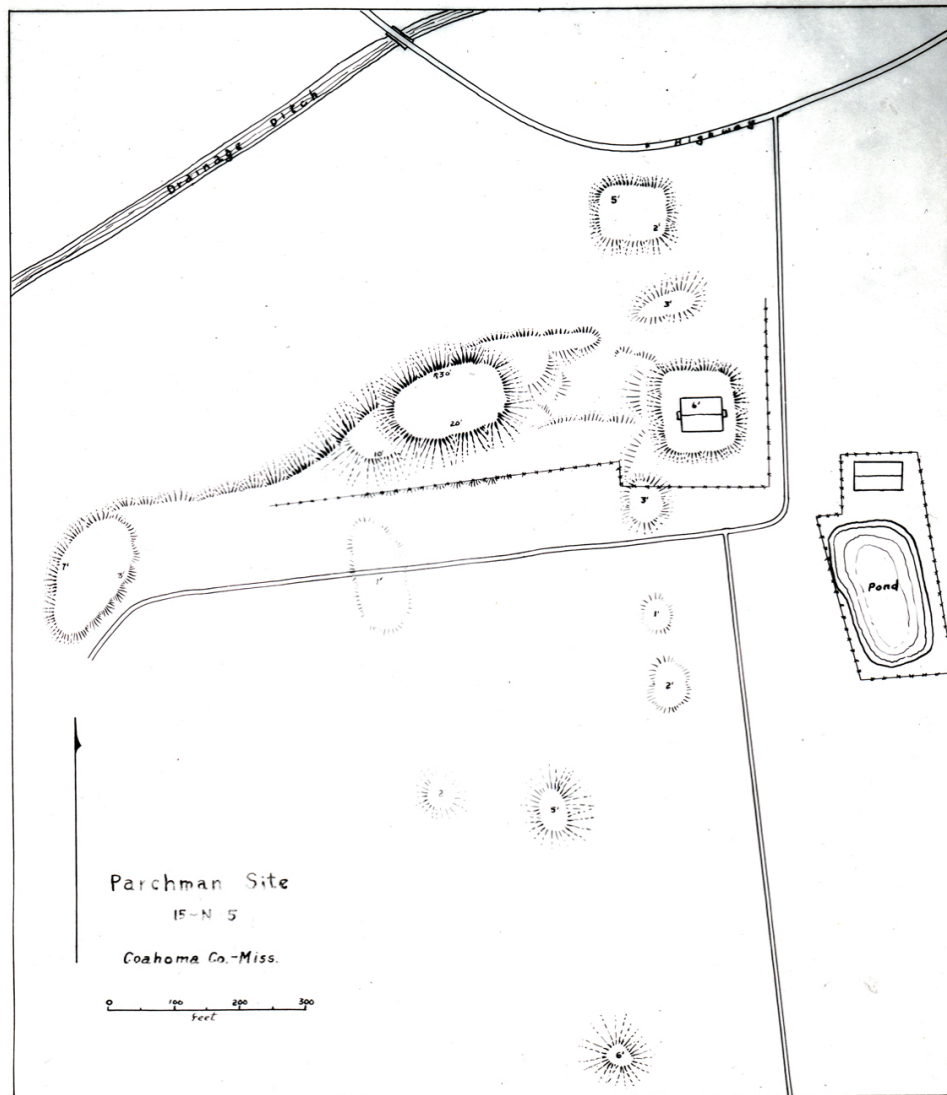


Figure 5.1. Parchman Place (22C0511), Coahoma County, Mississippi. Plane table map produced by Ford and Griffin of the Lower Mississippi Survey (LMS) in 1940 (© President and Fellows of Harvard University, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 993-23-10/100524.2.2.3.1/99090048).

northeastern quadrant of the site and the other well to the south of the plaza. Haag's (1950) and Brown's (1978) maps also show the presence of house mounds surrounding the plaza. Haag recorded two on the western edge of the plaza and as many as four more (with less confidence), while Brown's map confirms the two recorded by Haag and indicates up to three more. None of

the house mounds are currently visible, and one objective of the current research was to ascertain through coring and excavation whether anything remained of them below the current surface.

In addition to mapping, Ford and Griffin made an “adequate” surface collection (Phillips 1970: 940) from Parchman, noting a relative scarcity of pottery but quite a lot of daub (Steponaitis et al. 2002). Brown (1978) and members of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) (Starr 1984) also conducted surface collections at the site, and ceramic types and varieties recovered from these collections were compared with the results of my 2010-2011 surface collections in Chapter 2. Finally, the MDAH crew also mapped a series of discrete daub scatters that were outcropping along the eastern edge of the plaza that they (and I) interpret as the remains of burned Mississippian houses (Connaway 1984b). In a later section of this chapter, I provide a GIS reconstruction of the locations of these features.

## **Methods and Results**

### *Geophysical Survey*

Beginning in 2002, Jay Johnson and colleagues began conducting near-surface geophysical investigations at Parchman, beginning with a magnetic gradiometer survey of a 5.6 ha area located south of the mound group (Johnson and Haley 2006; Johnson 2008). This survey encompassed 145 20 x 20 m grids and was conducted using two GeoScan FM 36 fluxgate gradiometers at a survey interval of 1 x .25 m. Processing the data in Geoplot revealed at least 30 rectangular anomalies of strong positive value (typically 20 to 60 nT), each surrounded by a halo of strong negative value (typically -10 to -40 nT). These anomalies stand in stark contrast to surrounding areas that are magnetically clean (Figure 5.2).

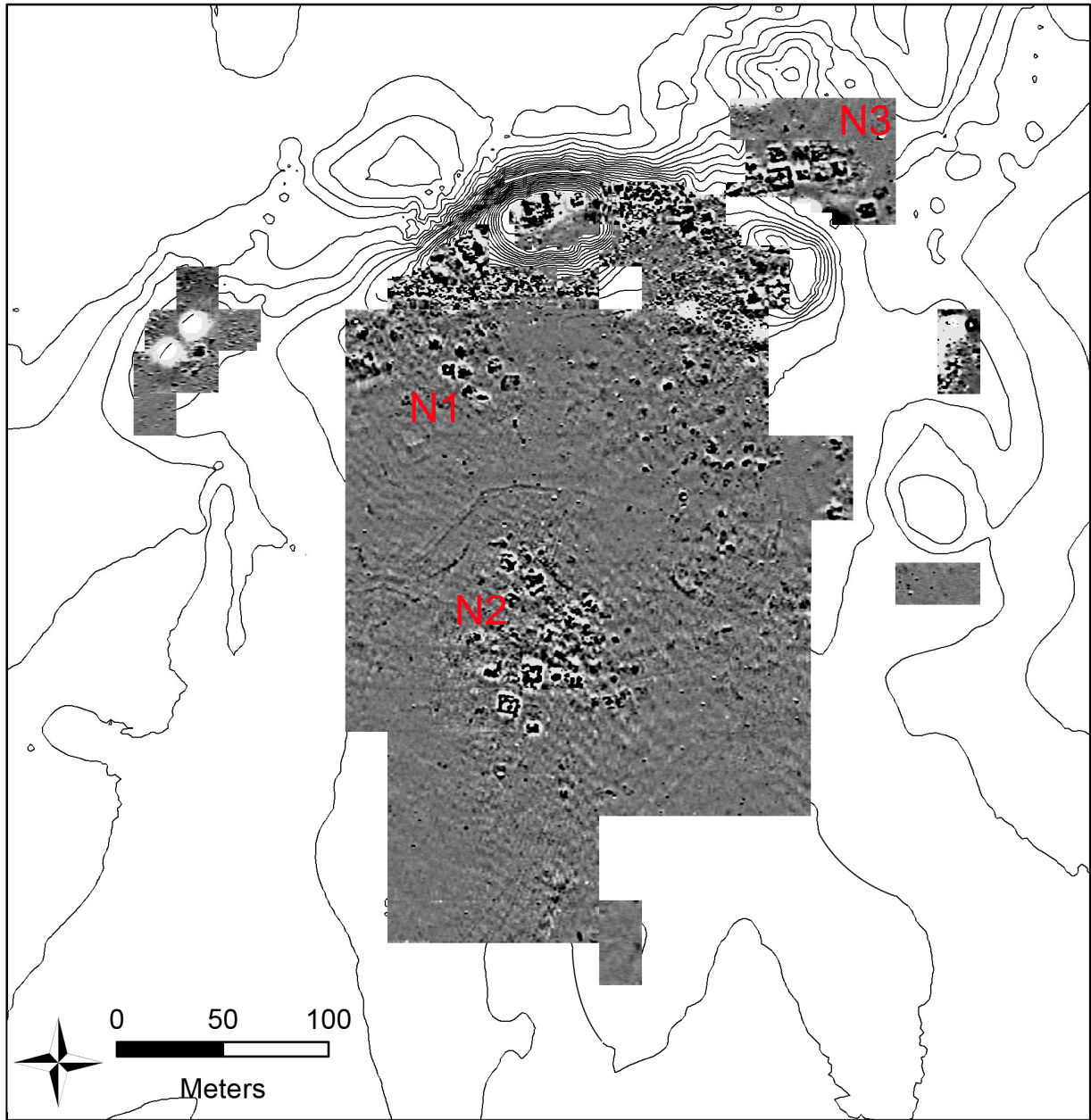


Figure 5.2. Results of magnetic gradiometer survey at Parchman Place (22CO511) from 2002-2011, indicating three residential areas or neighborhoods (N1, N2, N3).

The general size and shape of the rectangular anomalies suggest that they are the remains of Mississippi period domestic structures. Excavations (described below) have shown that these houses were burned prior to their abandonment, a process that enhanced their remnant magnetism. The resulting magnetic pattern was created by fired daub rubble outlining house

floors located 40-60 cm below ground surface (CAR 2004). Burned structures detected by initial gradiometry surveys fall primarily into two discrete clusters—the first at the northwest perimeter of the plaza near the base of Mound E (N1), the second in the southern plaza (N2). Additional buildings on the summits of Mounds A and E, as well as the swale between Mounds A and B were discovered by survey undertaken from 2002-2004, and a number of magnetic anomalies with less clear signatures were located along the eastern perimeter of the plaza.

In 2009, 12 additional 20 x 20 m grids of gradiometer data were collected by myself and Bryan Haley in the previously un-surveyed northeastern portion of the site (east and north of Mounds A and B, respectively). This survey was conducted with a Bartington Systems Grad601 fluxgate gradiometer with dual sensors at a survey interval of .5 x .25 m. Processing of the data by Haley revealed a number of anomalies with comparable magnetic signatures to those identified as houses in previous surveys. Ten of these houses cluster into two rows separated by a narrow lane or alleyway that is magnetically clean (N3). Figure 5.2 shows the composite results of magnetometry surveys conducted at Parchman.

At Parchman then, clear magnetic signatures are a good indicator of well-fired architecture buried 60 cm or less below the surface. Coring and test excavations (discussed below) show that less clear signatures also frequently represent architectural features, though these are typically not as well fired. Excavations also suggest that many structures are present but not detected by the gradiometer, either because they are buried too deeply or are covered by later structures that prevent their detection. Plowing has also impacted a number of structures.

Overall, site-wide geophysical exploration at Parchman has delineated a number of near-surface features that are relevant for thinking about past social interactions at multiple scales of analysis. First, more than 40 anomalies can be identified as domestic structures based on their

size, shape and magnetic signature. They correspond well with excavated subsurface features and are therefore a good indicator of the location, size, and orientation of burned, near surface buildings (CAR 2004). Second, clusters of houses separated from one another by magnetically clean areas can be identified as discrete residential districts. Three such “neighborhoods” are evident in the magnetometer data (N1, N2, and N3 in Figure 5.2). Third, empty spaces within neighborhoods are delineated as magnetically clean areas bounded by anomalies identified as houses. These empty spaces take two forms at Parchman. In Neighborhoods 1 and 2, three or more houses are arranged around central spaces or courtyards that are free of magnetic anomalies (Figure 5.3.a. & b.). In Neighborhood 3, houses are arranged in two parallel rows with a narrow (3 m wide) magnetically clean corridor running between them (Figure 5.3.c.). No evidence of architecture or other archaeological features is present within this corridor. Finally, the geophysical survey allows us to identify a large empty space bounded by Neighborhoods 1 and 2 along its northwest and southern perimeter. Mounds A, B, and E delineate this space to the north. While this large open area was tentatively identified as a plaza as early as the 1940s, gradiometer survey confirms that it was kept free of habitations.

While the patterns discussed above are clearly demonstrated by the geophysical data, there are a number of magnetic anomalies located along the eastern perimeter of the plaza with

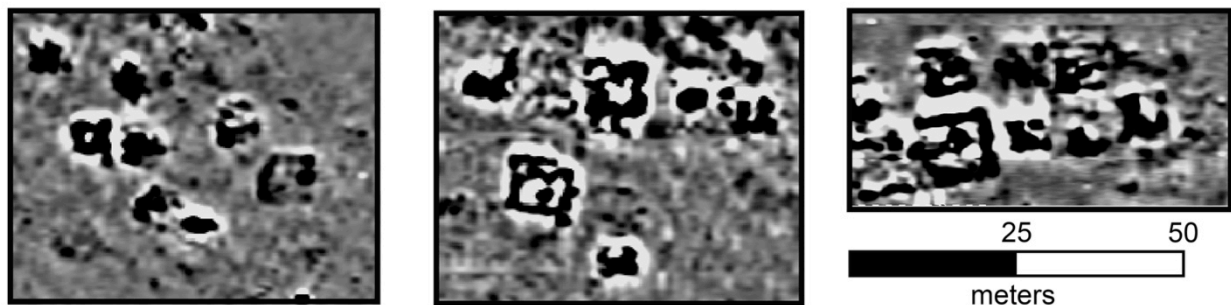


Figure 5.3. Magnetic anomalies indicate courtyard arrangements in Neighborhoods 1 (a.) and 2 (b.), and linear arrangement of houses separated by a path in Neighborhood 3 (c.).

less clear signatures (see Figure 5.2). These anomalies are typically smaller than house features, are of irregular shape, and are inconsistent in strength and regularity of magnetic signature. Other archaeological evidence, however, suggests that these anomalies probably also represent the remains of buried houses. LMS archaeologists sketched a series of “small house mounds with much daub” along the eastern edge of the plaza when they visited the site in 1940 (see Figure 5.1) (Steponaitis *et. al* 2002). Additionally, surface daub scatters recorded in the 1980s, controlled surface collections conducted in 2010 and 2011, and limited excavation (all discussed below) support this interpretation.

#### *GIS Reconstruction of Surface Daub Scatters*

In April of 1984 MDAH archaeologists, under the direction of John Connaway, recorded the locations and dimensions of a number of daub concentrations along the eastern edge of the plaza and further south that were outcropping in the plowed field (Connaway 1984b). According to Connaway, at that time, plows were pulling up chunks of daub as large as eighteen inches across (Connaway, personal communication 2010). These daub concentrations were composed of discrete clusters of heavily concentrated architectural elements and almost certainly represent the remains of burned houses.

Using the corner of a barn as reference point, the MDAH crew took a series of distance and angle measurements to each daub concentration and also recorded their dimensions (Connaway 1984b). The barn is no longer there, but fortunately was mapped by the LMS survey crew in 1940. As the LMS map overlays nicely on modern topographic maps, I used it as a base map to reconstruct the locations of the daub scatters recorded by Connaway and colleagues using ArcMap’s Distance and Angle tool (Figure 5.4). The resulting reconstruction shows that the daub

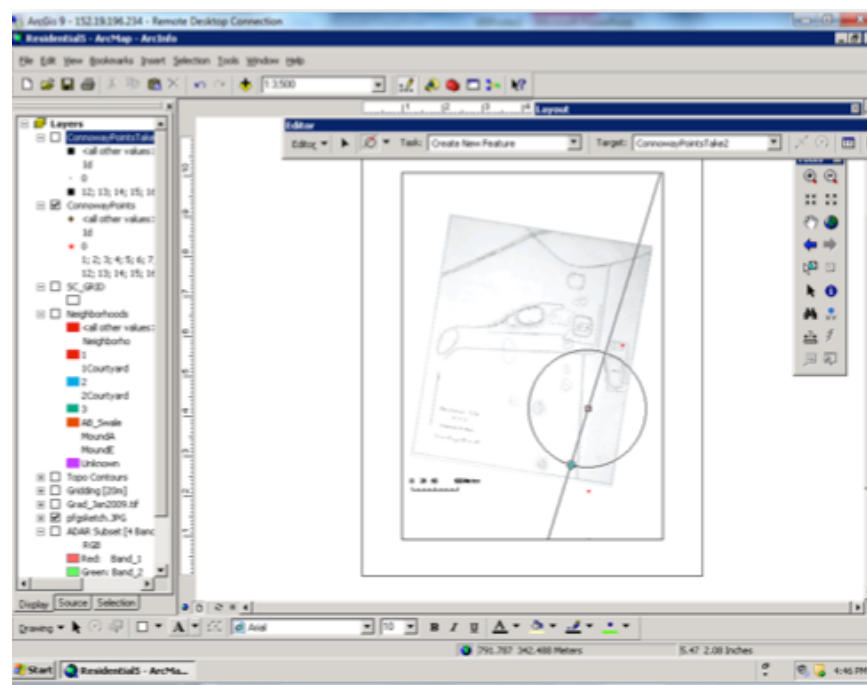


Figure 5.4. Screen shot depicting reconstruction of surface daub scatters using ArcMap's Distance and Angle tool.

concentrations fall into two discrete clusters (Figure 5.5). The first is located along the southeastern perimeter of the plaza just to the east of two of the house mounds recorded by the LMS (I refer to this cluster as Neighborhood 4). The second (Neighborhood 5) is located some distance to the south of the main site area. The location of the second cluster is a bit of a surprise, as it falls well outside the plaza and a considerable distance from the southernmost house mound recorded by the LMS. However, Connaway (personal communication 2013) has confirmed that my GIS reconstruction accords with his memory of the locations of daub concentrations as they appeared at the time they were recorded. Though the spatial arrangement of structures within Neighborhoods 4 and 5 are not as clear as those recorded within the magnetometer imagery for Neighborhoods 1, 2, and 3, it appears that at least some structures in Neighborhood 4 were also arranged around central courtyards.



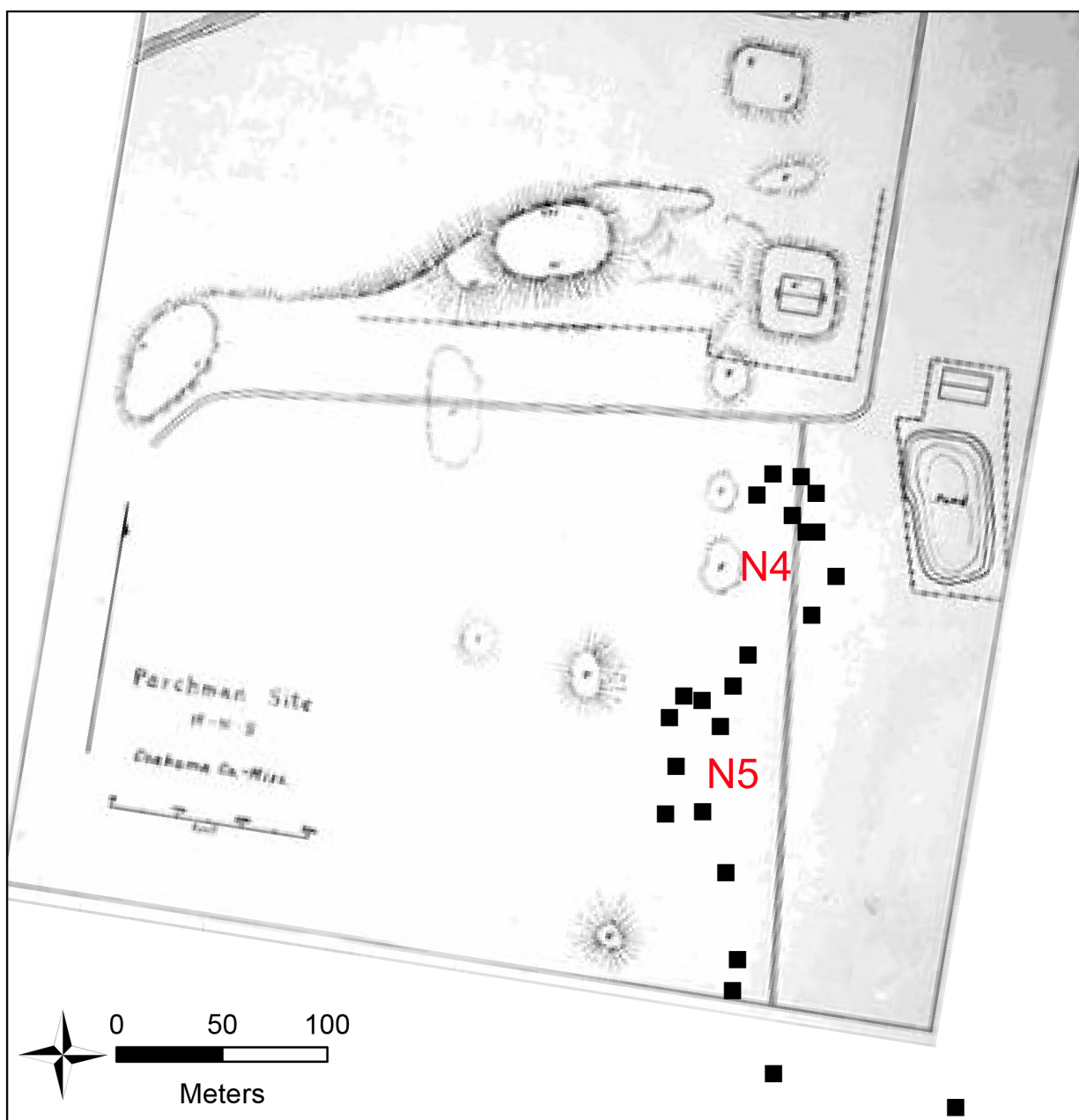


Figure 5.5. Reconstructed locations of surface daub scatters mapped by MDAH. Dimensions of house features are not to scale.

### *Controlled Surface Collections*

With the help of several student volunteers from the Universities of North Carolina and Mississippi, I conducted controlled surface collections across the site during the summer of 2010. These were supplemented with additional collections the following summer in parts of the

site that had not received adequate coverage, primarily along the northeastern, northwestern, and southern perimeters of the 2010 collection grid (Figure 5.6). Controlled surface collections extended beyond the boundaries of the gradiometer survey, however, they did not extend beyond Neighborhood 5, the location of which was not known to me until I performed the reconstruction just described in 2013 (Nelson 2014).

Using a 20 x 20 m grid system based on the planted field rows, collectors did timed collections of 25% of plowed portions of the site, extending the survey in all directions until surface material dropped off. Despite plow disturbance, areas of high surface artifact density correspond well with the residential areas located using geophysical techniques, while areas that

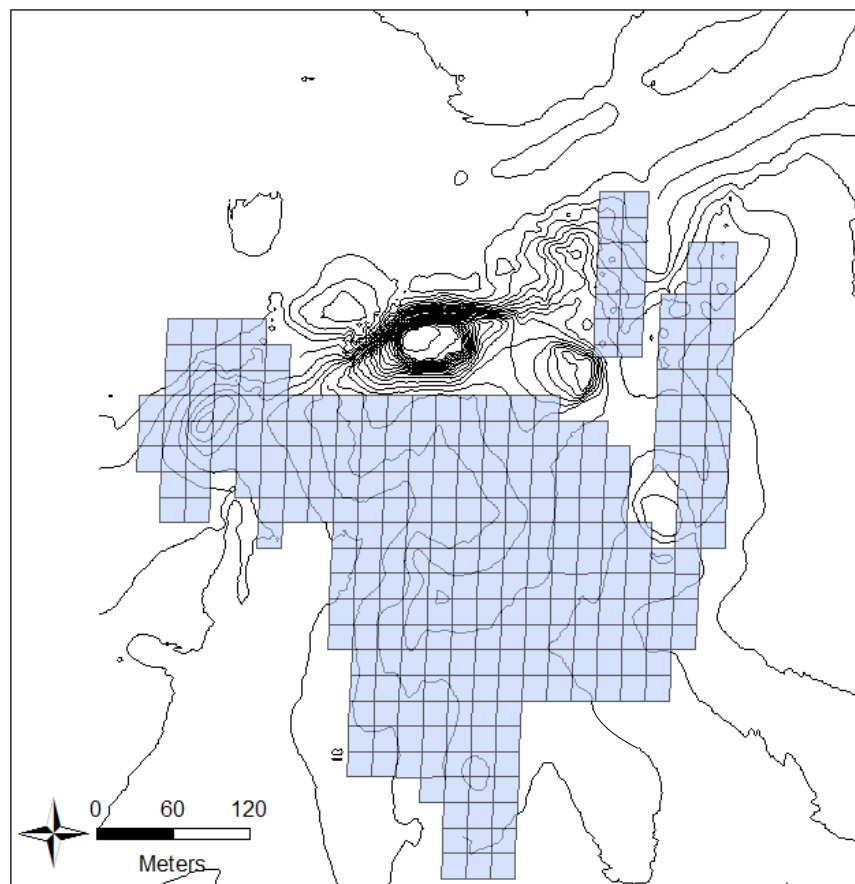


Figure 5.6. 2010 and 2011 surface collection grid, Parchman Place (22CO511).

were magnetically clean (such as the plaza) had low artifact densities. Significantly, the surface collection indicated high levels of cultural activity along the eastern perimeter of the plaza, an area that was magnetically noisy, but lacked clear patterning in the magnetic imagery. The LMS sketch map confirms occupation in this area, showing three house mounds along the eastern edge of the plaza, and the daub scatters designated “Neighborhood 4” are also located nearby (see Figure 5.5). Additionally, the surface collections indicate relatively high artifact densities at the southeastern base of Mound A (e.g. northeastern plaza perimeter). It is unknown whether this was also a residential area. In any case, the geophysical data does not indicate the presence of burned structures here.

#### *Coring Archaeological Features*

Coring at the site was opportunistic rather than systematic and involved the testing of two separate feature classes: (1) magnetic anomalies that I suspected might be midden-filled pits, and (2) “house mounds” recorded by the LMS. In January of 2009, and again throughout the 2010 summer field season, student volunteers from the Universities of Mississippi and North Carolina and I used an Oakfield .75 inch soil probe and later a 3.25 inch bucket auger to core locations that corresponded to magnetic anomalies thought to be midden-filled pits. These anomalies appeared in the geophysical data as small, dark, circular or oval blobs with rather indistinct boundaries, as opposed to structures, which are more strongly magnetic and appeared as dark square or rectangular shapes with distinct boundaries. Though over 50 such anomalies were tested, the coring was overwhelmingly unsuccessful at identifying pit features, despite initially promising results in the form of high artifact densities in some locations.

Based on the coring, I chose several locations in and near residential areas to place test excavations, the results of which are described in detail below. In every case, the magnetic anomaly thought to represent a midden pit turned out, in fact, to be the result of burned structural remains. Often, these structures were fired less completely or buried more deeply than those with more identifiable magnetic signatures. I will not spend more time or ink here in describing the results of hand-coring, though a list of coordinates tested and the results of the those tests can be provided to interested parties. The coring and subsequent test excavations do, however, lead me to two significant conclusions: (1) though a small number of pits have been excavated at Parchman, pits were not a primary means of storage here; (2) the geophysical survey merely scratches the surface in terms of the Mississippian structures identified at the site.

On October 22, 2010 and again on June 24, 2011, Rachel Stout-Evans, a soil scientist with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Metcalfe, Mississippi branch, visited Parchman to conduct some coring with the NRCS's truck-mounted Giddings rig. Guided by the LMS map, which was georeferenced to the site grid using ArcMap, we placed cores in the locations of four of the eight house mounds mapped by the LMS in 1940. The first two locations are in the two northernmost of these features located along the eastern edge of the plaza (designated HM1 and HM2 in Figure 5.7). We also extracted a core from a location in between HM1 and HM2 for comparison with the surrounding soil profile. Lightening prevented us from using the Giddings rig to core the third of the eastern plaza boundary mounds (HM3), and we cored it by hand instead. We also placed a core in the location of the isolated southernmost LMS house mound (HM4). These locations were chosen because we knew practically nothing about the features located here or even if evidence of them still existed.

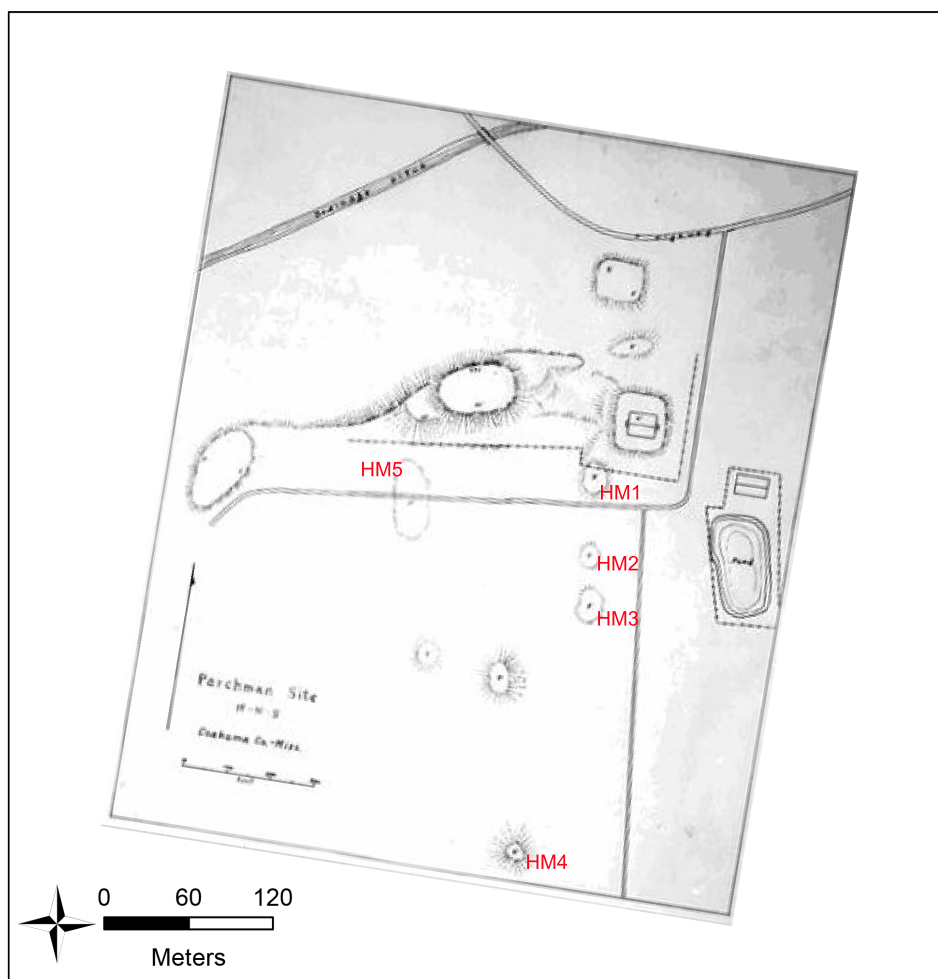


Figure 5.7. 1940s LMS map of Parchman Place (22CO511) showing locations of House Mounds cored in 2010 and 2011.

Overall, the results of coring were mixed. The cores placed in HM1 and HM2 encountered cultural fill to depths of 90 cm and 68 cm respectively (Stout-Evans 2011b). The fill in the location of HM1 had organic staining on ped surfaces and contained both daub and charcoal. Stout-Evans also identified redoxomorphic features of an “olivey-yellow” color within the fill that she has previously only encountered in mound fill (Stout-Evans, personal communication 2011). Additionally, she determined that the fill had originated from somewhere lower on the landscape because the clay content (~30%) is too high for that particular location on

the levee. Underneath the fill there is a natural sandy levee soil profile that extends from 93 cm below the surface until the terminal depth of the core at 120 cm below the surface.

The core in HM2 was composed of fill roughly similar to that of HM1, but also contained some additional cultural features, including a burned structure floor 25 cm below the surface. Like other structural remains at the site, this floor was compacted and fired, resulting in an oxidized appearance. Roughly 40 cm of fill were deposited prior to the floor's preparation, and Stout-Evans described the upper portion of it as "greasy" in texture. At 68 cm below the surface the core encountered a 12 cm thick buried A horizon that represents the natural surface that existed when the site was first occupied. Below that, a natural levee soil profile extends to the terminal depth of the core at 1 m 10 cm below the surface (Stout-Evans 2011b).

While the two cores described above could be interpreted as the former locations of house mounds due to the nature of the fill and cultural inclusions, coring between these two locations throws a wrench into this interpretation. In short, the soil profile is quite similar here to those of the two house mound locations, consisting of 93 cm of redeposited fill with organic staining on ped faces as well as daub and charcoal inclusions. There is no evidence, however, of the distinctive redoxomorphic features that seem to be exclusively related to mound fill. As in the location of HM2, underneath the fill we encountered a buried A horizon on top of another horizon (a buried Bt) representing the natural formation of levee soils (Stout-Evans 2011b).

The possible significance of the presence or lack of olive-yellow redox features and the basic similarity of the three profiles just described leads to the possibility of two divergent interpretations: (1) House mounds mapped by the LMS are still present as buried fill zones and can be identified by their distinctive redox features. The mounds themselves and the swales between them have been leveled out as a result of plowing. Alternatively: (2) House mounds

mapped by the LMS have been completely destroyed and are no longer present. The fill zones identified by coring are the result of some other activity, such as earthmoving intended to build up and/or level the plaza area of the site. Such modification of plazas is common for Mississippian sites and has been documented at the nearby late Mississippian site of Hollywood (Haley 2014). Unfortunately, the hand-coring of HM3 throws little light on the situation—though not recorded in detail, coring in this location consisted of approximately 60 cm of cultural fill on top of a soil profile typical of natural levee development. A more extensive program of systematic coring will be needed to resolve the issue, though such a program is beyond the scope of the current work.

Coring in the location of HM4, far to the south of the main site features, was also inconclusive. Here, the upper portions of the core consisted of 56 cm of dark anthropogenic soil with organic stains on ped faces but less charcoal than in previously described cores and no daub to speak of. The remainder of the profile (to a depth of 2 m 10 cm below the surface) is representative of active natural levee formation. As the house mound mapped in this location was recorded as being 2 m in height (as tall as Mound B and taller than Mound D), I suspect that it has long been plowed away or otherwise removed (it was not recorded on Haag's 1950 map or Brown's 1977 map). If evidence of it still exists, then our coring unfortunately missed it.

The remaining cores extracted with the Giddings rig cluster around an excavation trench in Neighborhood 1, in which we did, in fact, locate the remains of the largest house mound recorded by the LMS (HM5). As a detailed description of the excavation profile is described below, I will not describe the core profiles here. Although we were not able to determine exact dimensions for the buried portion of the house mound, we did determine that several of the fill zones are “mounded” in shape.

### *Neighborhood 1 Excavation*

An excavation trench was placed in the location of Neighborhood 1 near the base of Mound E in order to investigate a positive auger test placed to intersect a “house mound” recorded on the 1940 LMS map, the only recorded house mound to be positively identified. Figure 5.8 shows its location in relation to nearby geophysical anomalies. A 5 x 1 m trench was excavated in the summers of 2010 and 2011 by myself and student volunteers from the University of North Carolina. The excavation encountered some interesting stratigraphy, including a thick layer of redeposited ash and evidence of two raised living surfaces. The following narrative outlines our findings from the base of the excavation up (Figure 5.9).

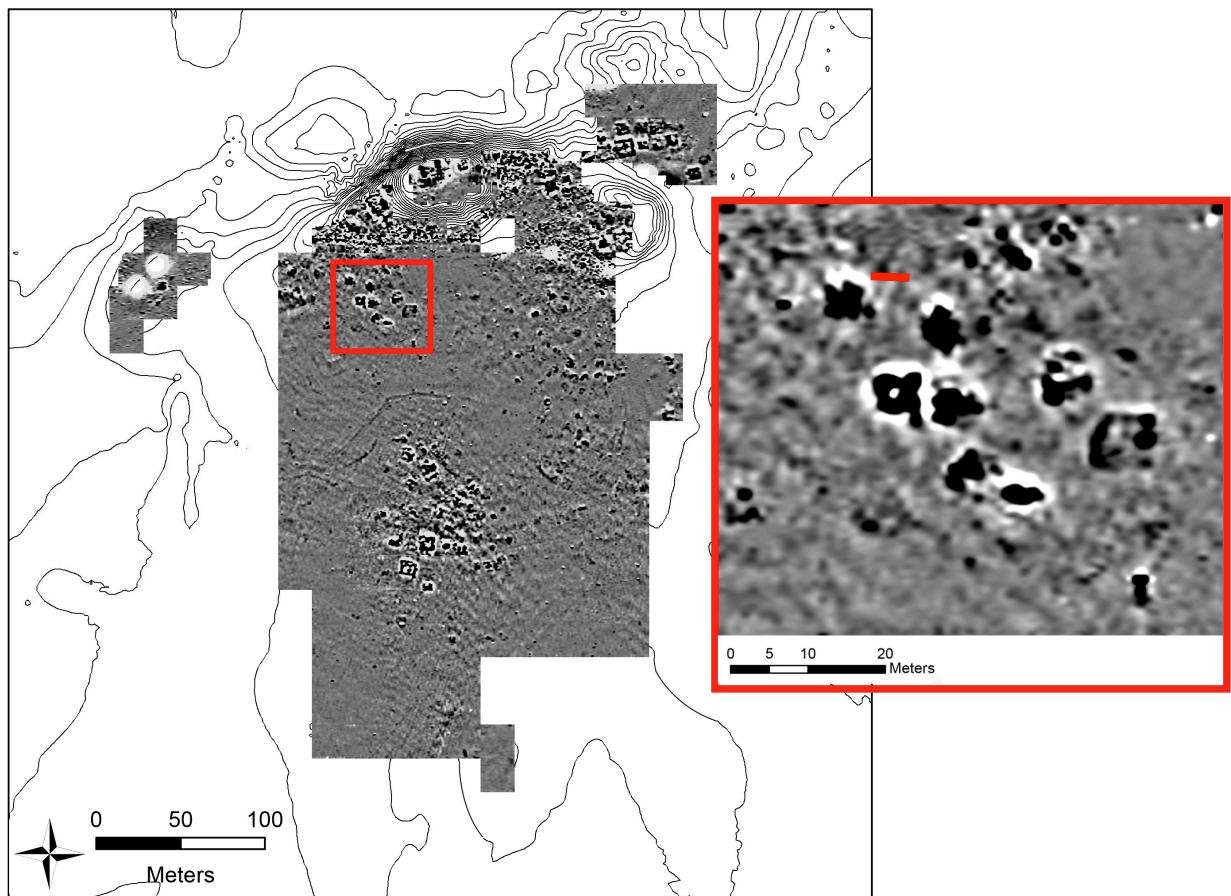


Figure 5.8. Location of Neighborhood 1 excavation. 5 x 1 m trench is plotted in red in insert.



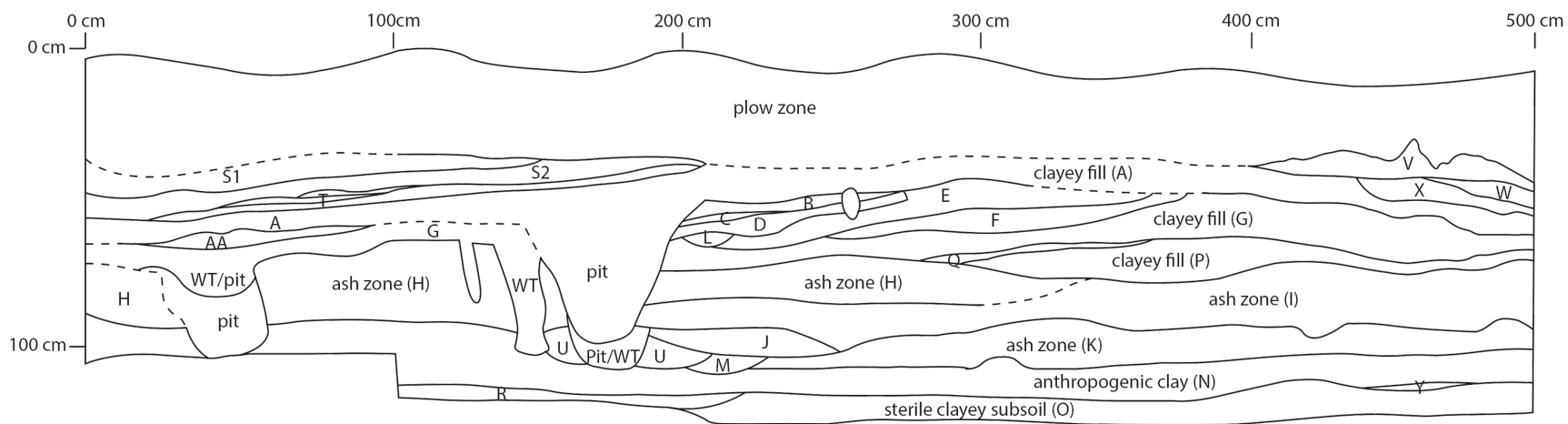


Figure 5.9. South profile wall of Neighborhood 1 excavation trench at Parchman Place (22CO511).

The earliest soil horizon (Zone O) in the Neighborhood 1 trench is sterile soil made up of black, blocky clay with dark gray mottles. Zones R and Y are small discrete deposits of mottled clayey soil that do not contain cultural material. Directly on top of these three zones is the first occupational zone (Zone N), a 15-20 cm thick black, anthropogenic clayey soil with a large quantity of charcoal. This zone also includes an abundance of fairly large sherds and large deer bones, which I interpret as evidence of primary deposition. A sample of burned thatch from Zone N returned an AMS date of cal  $640 \pm 30$  B.P (Table 4.1).

Deposited on top of this original living surface is a series of white powdery ash deposits containing an abundance of charcoal (Figure 5.10). The ash layers primarily consist of three fairly thick depositional zones (K, I, and H), though several small, discrete deposits containing ash, charcoal, and a small amount of daub (zones U, M, and J) are present in between the clayey original surface and the majority of the ash. These smaller zones are somewhat obscured by a possible pit or wall trench with unknown origins.

The ash deposits do not represent *in situ* burning, but were moved here from another location on the site, possibly from individual household cooking hearths or from the remains of a much larger burning event. The sheer quantity of ash as well as its undifferentiated nature within the three major zones suggest the latter interpretation. However, ash from household cooking fires could also have been collected and mixed prior to its deposition in this location. It is clear, however, that the ash resulted from one or more cooking and/or eating events, and not from some other burning event such as the destruction of a building by fire. All three primary zones of ash contain broken pottery vessels as well as food remains (Melton 2013; Nelson et al. 2013a). Zone K, the earliest



Figure 5.10. Photograph of ash zone (H) in Neighborhood 1 excavation trench at Parchman Place (22CO511). View east.

of the ash deposits, is roughly 10 cm thick, while the next major deposit (I) ranges from 10 to 25 cm thick. Like Zone K, Zone I is composed of gray ash with charcoal and contains abundant food remains. On top of Zone I is zone H, a 10-30 cm thick layer of light gray ash with charcoal. Given the importance of ash generally and practices related

to its disposal in particular, I interpret this series of deposits as evidence of specialized activities, which I discuss in more detail below.

The top of the ashy deposits (i.e. the interface of H and G) appears to be an occupational surface—a single wall trench originates here, as does another large wall trench or pit with two zones, and there is daub and ash in zones P and Q, which sit directly on top of zones H and I. Therefore, all the major ashy zones are underneath the first building that stood in this spot (if it was a building in the traditional sense—the lack of a fired floor is anomalous if this is the case).

Significantly, the remains of a human infant were placed at the base of the pit or trench located at the east end of the excavation trench. The remains were well preserved, and all skeletal elements were present and articulated. Jenna James, then a Ph.D. student at the University of Alabama, estimated the age of the infant at 6-9 months based on dental traits, though bone metrics gave a broader age estimate of 0-1 year. The infant showed no signs of nutritional stress or trauma and was buried in an extended position (James 2012). After recording, the remains were reburied and excavation was discontinued in that area. It is unclear whether the pit was dug specifically for the purpose of burying the child or whether the remains were placed at the base of an existing wall trench. The northeastern boundary of the pit/trench terminates within the unit, but the southwestern portion extends into the excavation wall, so there is no way to determine its length. Until the burial was encountered, excavators interpreted the long, narrow dimensions of the feature as one end of a wall trench.

Following the infant burial and the presumed occupation of the surface of the ashy deposits, the entire area was covered with clayey fill. Zones P and Q contain daub,

which may be a result of the destruction of a building indicated by the confirmed wall trench to the east. Zone G completely caps the area. Composed of very dark grayish brown clay loam with moderate charcoal, it may represent a burial event associated with the destruction of the presumed structure.

The remaining deposits were difficult to separate during excavation but represent more than one episode of occupation. They include zones Z and AA, and (in order of deposition) zones F, E, L, D, C, and B. These zones are all redeposited fills, most of which have charcoal inclusions. Notably, Zone L is hard-packed as though fired, and possibly represents a small chunk of floor or wall, though there is no other evidence of a structure at this level; Zones D and B are both comprised of ash with abundant charcoal inclusions.

A pit feature visible in the south profile wall (Figure 5.9) originates at the surface of these most recent deposits—i.e. at the surface of Zone G towards the east and Zone B towards the west. The pit feature indicates a living surface that was occupied for some period of time. However, there is no other evidence of a building at this point in the sequence. The pit fill itself had some interesting contents, including several skull fragments of an adult human as well as a small ceramic bowl carefully placed or wedged in a small nook dug into the pit wall. The skull fragments were not recognized during excavation as the pit fill was collected in its entirety for flotation. Ashley Peles identified the remains in the laboratory while analyzing the site's faunal remains. Dale Hutchinson, a bioarchaeologist at the University of North Carolina, examined the fragments and determined that they belonged to an adult individual, approximately 30-50 years of age,

and that there was evidence of porotic hyperostosis, which was healing at the time of death (Dale Hutchinson, personal communication 2013).

The next major zone is Zone A, a fill zone that completely caps the underlying deposits. Zone A is described by excavators as very dark grayish brown silty clay with large chunks of daub and charcoal flecks—its fill is similar to that of the underlying pit with the exception of the large chunks of daub. On top of this capping zone are a series of deposits to the west, including zones X, W, and V, and another series of deposits to the east, including zones S and T. All of these, as well as Zone A have been partially destroyed by plowing activity. While it is not clear what type of activity is represented by the deposits to the west, zone T to the east shows indications of *in situ* burning, with oxidized, charcoal-rich, and ashy layers. A number of pottery sherds are lying flat on the surface of zone T, and are covered by zone S, a series of dark gray clayey deposits with daub and charcoal inclusions. The flat sherds sandwiched between zones T and S may indicate another living surface in this location. A sample of carbonized cane from Zone T returned an AMS date of cal 482 ± 38 B.P. (Table 4.1). Finally, on top of Zone S is a mixed plow zone containing an abundance of ceramic and other artifacts, and coming down from the plow zone is a pit or large post with two (possibly three) zones—the interior zone has fill that contains ceramics, daub and bone, and the feature extends nearly all the way through the buried ashy zones.

Based on post, pit, and wall trench remnants, then, there are three probable living surfaces exposed by the excavation trench, all post-dating the thick ashy deposits below. Additionally, there is evidence for activity underneath the ashy deposits in the form of zone N, a “greasy” black anthropogenic soil horizon containing pottery fragments and

large deer bones that appear to have been trampled into the surface. The Neighborhood 1 excavation has been divided into four analysis units for the purposes of artifact analysis. Zone N as well as the underlying subsoil and sterile deposits make up Analysis Unit A (N1\_A in the correspondence analysis presented in Chapter 3). Analysis Unit A contained a jar-dominated domestic ceramic vessel assemblage characterized by coarse ware cooking jars as well as serving and storage vessels. The ashy deposits, as well as U, M, and J comprise Analysis Unit B (N1\_B). Analysis Unit B contained a bowl-dominated serving assemblage—the only non-mound context at Parchman to do so. In fact, the ashy deposits making up Analysis Unit B contain the highest proportion of serving vessels of any context at the site (Table 3. 12). The deposits covering the ashy mound surface and presumably associated with the building and its destruction (Zones G, Q, and P) are combined into Analysis Unit C. All other zones as well as the pit containing human remains have been combined into Analysis Unit D, though they represent more than one episode of deposition. Unfortunately, they could not be distinguished during excavation.

### *Neighborhood 2 Excavation*

During the summer of 2002, an excavation trench was located in the southern plaza to ground-truth one of several magnetic gradiometer anomalies that appeared to be Mississippian structures based on their size and shape (Figure 5.11). The excavation consists of five 1 x 1 m excavation units oriented north-south and was conducted by members of the 2002 University of Mississippi field school. The excavations encountered evidence of two burned structures and their associated features, including a large fired-

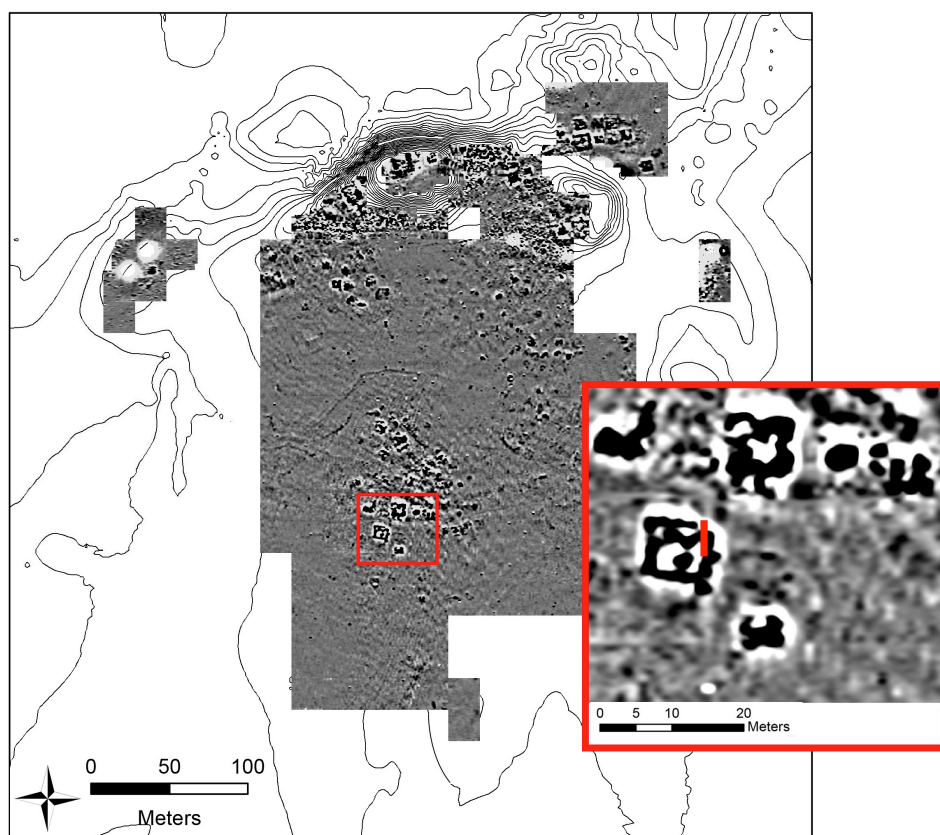


Figure 5.11. Location of Neighborhood 2 excavation at Parchman Place (22C0511). 1 x 5 m trench shown in red in inset.

clay hearth belonging to the earlier structure, as well as structural remains. The following narrative interprets the 2002 findings from the base of the excavation up.

The first structure in this location was built directly on the original ground surface (Figure 5.12). A portion of its floor runs the length of the excavation trench and its northern wall trench is visible in the northernmost unit. The wall trench is oriented east-west and has six postholes within it. Two pits located in the southernmost unit either pre-date the structure, or were features within it. In any case, the smaller of the two is superimposed by the larger. After these pits were filled in (and after the house was built) the upper portions of these pits were used as a hearth, which was completely surrounded by a fired clay lining (Figure 5.13). An additional



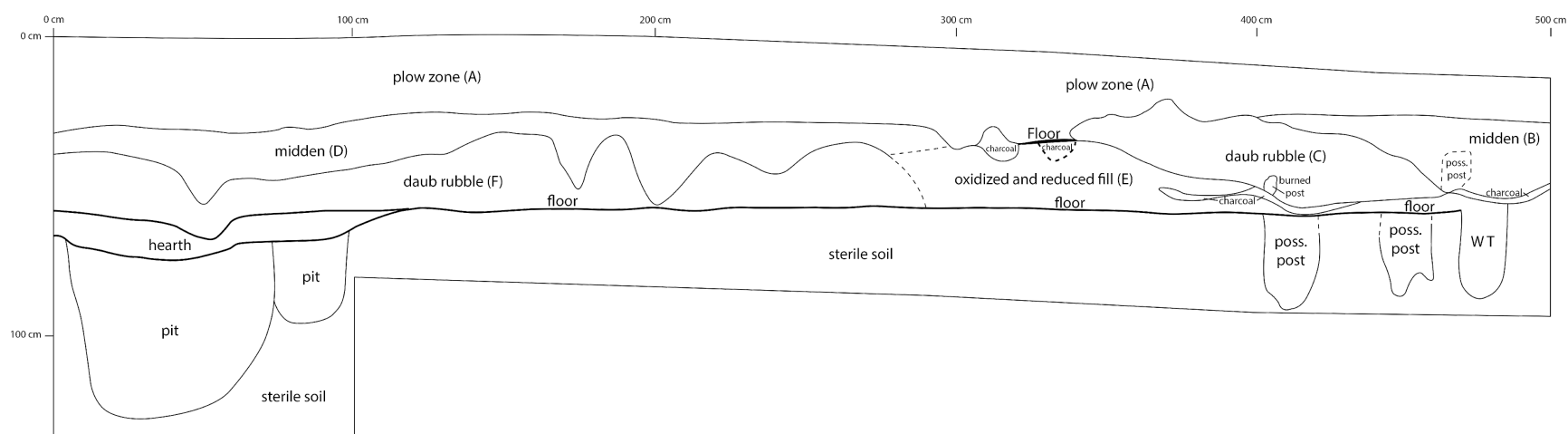


Figure 5.12. West profile wall of Neighborhood 2 excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).



Figure 5.13. Excavation trench in Neighborhood 2 at Parchman Place (22CO511) showing fired clay hearth associated with the earlier of two structures (foreground). The wall trench visible in the center of the trench belongs to the later structure.

pit feature associated with this early structure is located halfway through the trench but is not visible in the profile.

After this house was used, it was swept clean and then burned. There are burned beams and carbonized cane matting and thatch in contact with the floor in the northern portions of the trench, pictured in Figure 5.14. A sample of the thatch submitted for AMS dating returned a date



Figure 5.14. Burned beams associated in contact with earlier of two structure floors present in Neighborhood 2 excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).

of cal  $547 \pm 38$  B.P. (Table 4.1). Daub rubble (Zone F) covers the floor in the southern part of the unit, and the floor is more intensely fired/oxidized in the portion where the daub and burned material came in contact with it. After the structure burned, it was immediately covered over with fill (Zone E), which is both oxidized and reduced in places.

After the destruction of the house, a zone of fill composed of redeposited midden (Zone D) was used to create a level platform for a new construction. Most of this second structure has been destroyed by plowing but a fragment of burned floor can be seen in the west profile (Figure 5.12). It is sitting on top of fill zone E, which, along with D, creates the level platform. Additional evidence for this later structure includes a wall trench with numerous postholes

running north-south down the middle of the excavation trench (visible in Figure 5.13), suggesting that the excavation trench just clipped the eastern edge of the later structure. The wall trench and post features cut through all subsequent zones, including the floor and hearth associated with the earlier structure. At some point, the later structure was also burned, as evidenced by charcoal and the oxidized nature of the small intact portion of floor. Additionally, a thick layer of daub rubble (Zone C) was deposited on the northern slope of the raised house platform. More midden fill (Zone B) was placed on top of this daub. The uppermost deposit (A) has been disturbed by plowing. As very few artifacts were recovered, all deposits just described were combined into a single analysis unit (A) for the purposes of artifact analysis.

### *Neighborhood 3 Excavations*

*Unit 10-4.* A 1x1 m test excavation was placed to investigate a positive auger test in the vicinity of Neighborhood 3, where a number of magnetic gradiometer anomalies interpreted as burned Mississippian structures were identified (Figure 5.15). The excavation was conducted by me, with assistance from University of North Carolina student volunteers. The excavations uncovered at least five sequential occupations in this location. The following describes our findings, beginning at the base of the unit (Figure 5.16).

The earliest occupation in this location is represented by a fill zone (EE) and three posts (not visible in the profile) that originate at its upper surface. Zone EE consists of the sandy subsoil mixed with ash and may have been placed here to create a platform for a structure. As the surface begins to slope down toward the north, it appears that the excavation unit clipped the north edge of the platform and that the earliest structure associated with it was located to the south. This makes sense given the unit's location at the northern edge of one of the magnetic features in Neighborhood 3. The line of posts is oriented roughly east-west and is located 10 cm



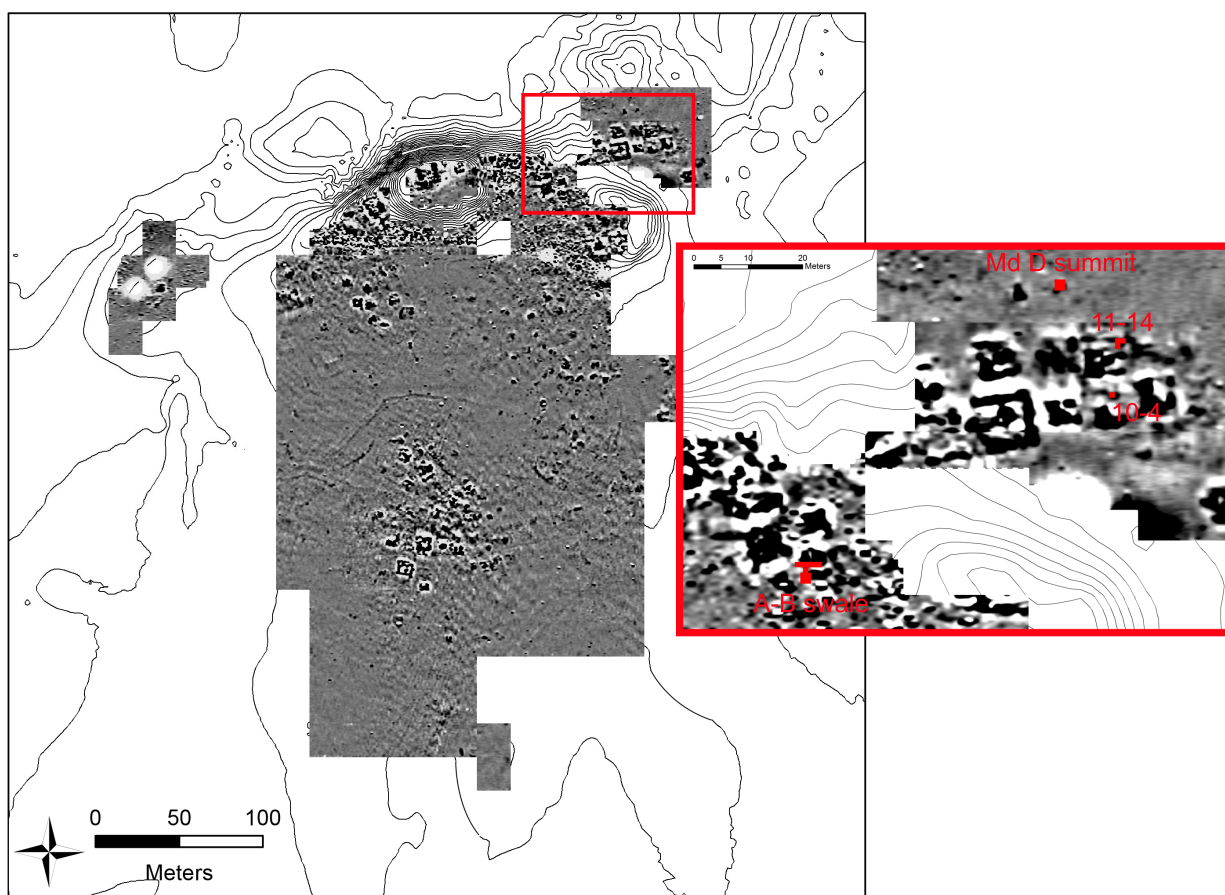


Figure 5.15. Location of excavations in Neighborhood 3 and the A-B swale. Excavation blocks are shown in red in inset. The Mound D summit excavation is also shown.

north of the southern excavation limit. No wall trench was positively identified, but one likely existed here.

Fired and carbonized structural remains deposited on the northern slope of the low platform indicate the building on its summit was destroyed by fire and the remains left where they fell or possibly pushed over the edge. A sample of carbonized thatch returned an AMS date of cal 505  $\pm$  38 B.P. (Figure 4.1). The burned structure was covered with a layer of fill (Zones U and V) that shows a pattern of oxidation and reduction typical for fills used to cover still-smoldering structures. More fill (zones T and S) was then placed on top to increase the height of

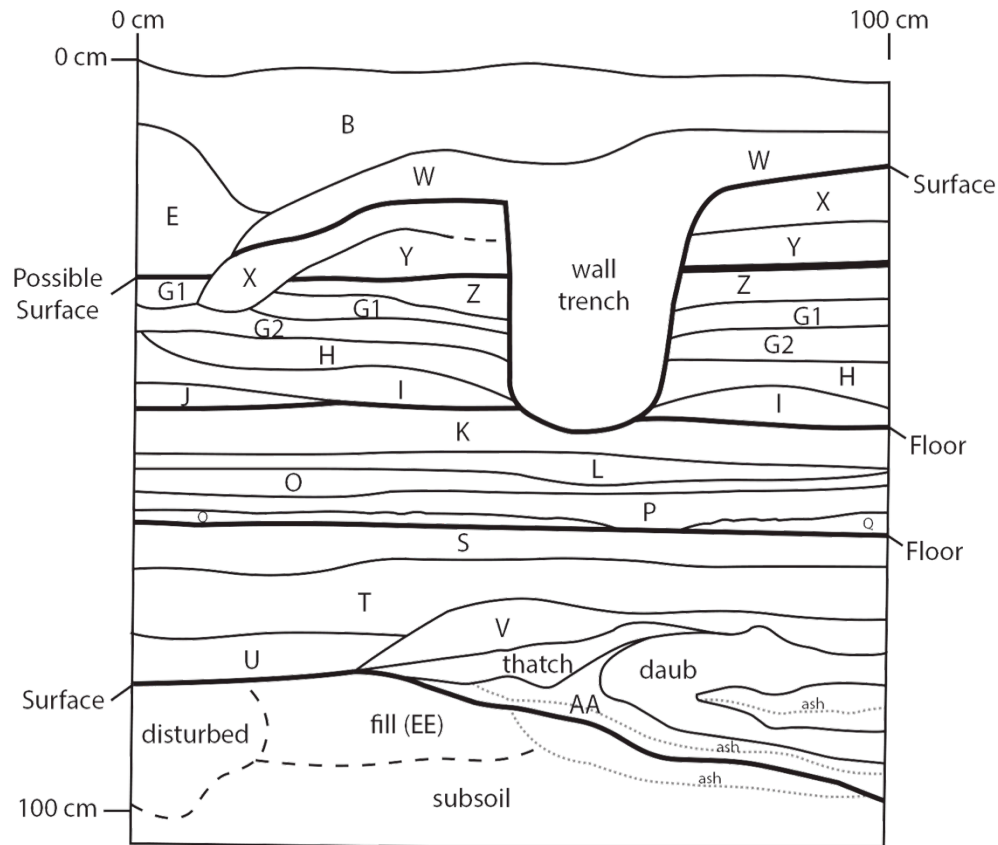


Figure 5.16. West profile of Neighborhood 3 (Unit 10-4) excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).

the platform. The surface of this fill zone is a prepared floor, though it is unfired and there are no structural remains associated with it. Another episode of zoned fill (zones Q, P, O, L, and K) lies on the surface of the floor and terminates in a third floor surface (top of zone K) that is similar to the previous one in being unfired and unassociated with structural remains. It is, however, slightly oxidized on its upper surface, perhaps indicating a low-temperature firing.

The next construction episode consists of another series of zoned fills (J, I, H, G), the upper limits of which possibly represent a fourth living surface. Though the surface slopes toward the north, it is flat in the southern portion of the unit, perhaps indicating that the main platform and associated structure was located toward the south, as with the first

platform/structure in this location. Two posts originate at this surface, both located in the southeast quadrant of the unit. A deposit of daub rubble (Zone Z) is located on the sloped surface, probably representing burned construction material from a building located on the platform to the south.

Zones Y, X, E, W, and B, all containing large quantities of fired daub, were deposited next. Though these zones are all disturbed by plowing, there appears to be another surface corresponding with the upper limit of Zone X, which is indicated by a wall trench that originates at the top of the zone (though X is made up primarily of daub, so it might originate from even further up, perhaps at the surface of Zones E/W). In any case, this wall trench represents a structure associated with another surface, which was buried prior the area's abandonment. All together, then, there are five sequential living surfaces here identified in this location. Due to difficulties in separating strata during excavation and the low overall artifact count, the entire excavation was collapsed into a single analysis unit (A) for the purposes of artifact analysis.

*Unit 11-13.* A deposit of large sherds was discovered in this location during surface collecting in Neighborhood 3. Though broken, they appeared to be part of a complete or nearly complete vessel. As they were protruding from the edge of a row in the planted portion of the neighborhood and could not be easily collected from the surface, we placed a 1x1 m excavation unit in this location (Figure 5.15) in order to map and recover what turned out to be three reconstructible pottery vessels as well as fragments of additional vessels. The original 1 x 1 m unit was excavated to a depth of nearly 120 cm to obtain information about stratigraphy and additional sub-surface features, while two additional units to the south and east were excavated to a depth sufficient to recover the broken vessels located between 20 and 35 cm from the

surface. The 2011 excavation was supervised by Anna Semon, a Ph.D. student at the University of North Carolina, and she was assisted by UNC undergraduate volunteers. The following narrative documents our findings, focusing on stratigraphy recovered from the original unit, beginning from the base of the excavation (Figure 5.17).

While there is no direct evidence of a building or living surface at the base of the excavation unit, there is evidence of structures nearby. Following the initial cultural deposit (zone J), which has charcoal and small daub inclusions, a layer of daub rubble (not visible in the profile) either fell or was pushed into the southwestern portion of the unit. The fill just

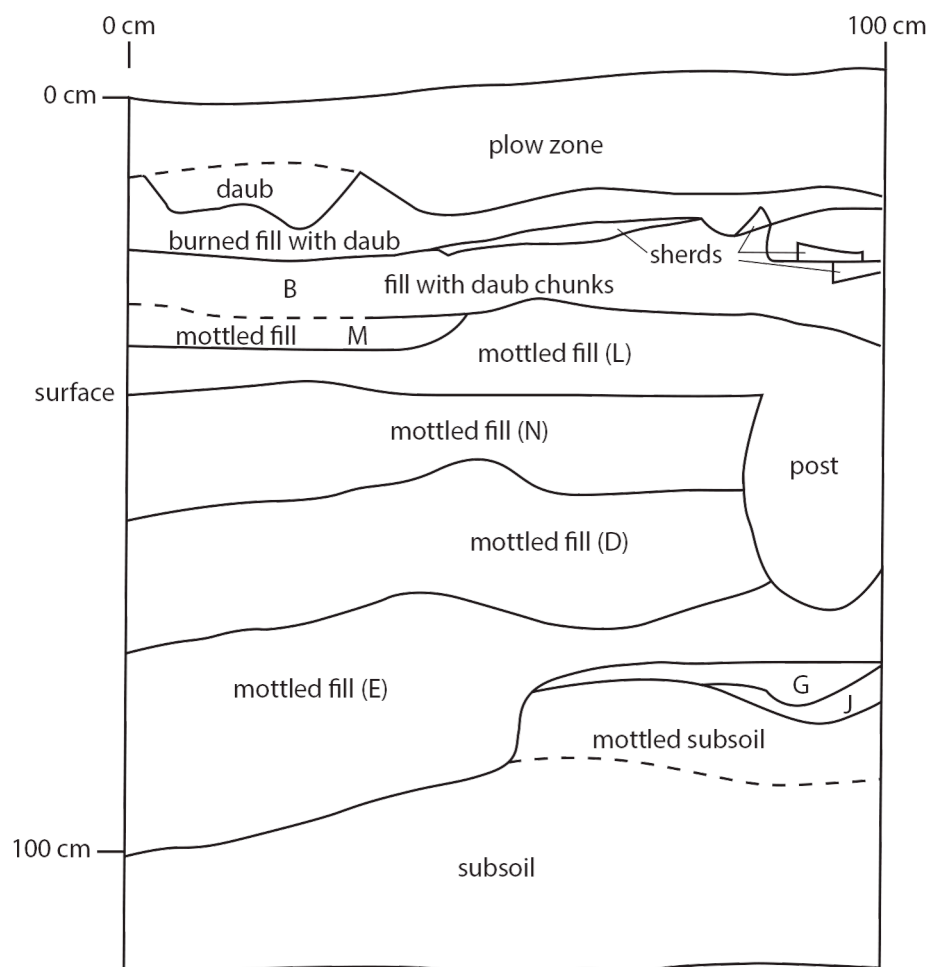


Figure 5.17. East profile of Neighborhood 3 Unit (11-13) excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).



underneath it was reduced, indicating the rubble was still hot when it was deposited. If similar to the pattern seen elsewhere at Parchman, the daub likely fell from a nearby structure that was burned at the end of its use life and was left in place then quickly buried. Again, this makes sense given the unit's proximity to a magnetic feature to the southwest. Zone G, which covers the daub layer, is mottled, but has very few inclusions. Approximately 60 cm of mottled fill (zones E, D, and N) were then deposited. The fill zones are similar in that they are quite mottled and have charcoal and daub inclusions throughout, though the uppermost of these zones (N) is less clayey and has fewer inclusions. The top of Zone N terminates in a floor or other surface. While the surface was difficult to identify during excavation, a single post located in the southwest corner of the unit originated at this level. If the post belongs to a structure, it was either unfired or located outside the limits of the excavation.

Following this apparent construction, additional mottled fill (zones L, M, and B) was deposited to cover it. The top of zone B represents the third occupational surface located within the unit, identified by an abundance of sherds lying on its surface. The sherds at this level (from this unit as well as those to the south and east) refit into three nearly complete vessels, including one bottle (illustrated in Figure 3.19) and two jars, as well as fragments of additional vessels. It is clear that some of the vessels were crushed in place. The largest of the three (illustrated in Figure 3.8) was excavated in two layers—sherds belonging to the uppermost layer were lying with their exterior faces up, while those belonging to the lower level were lying with their exterior faces down. The vessel was probably empty when it was crushed, as there was only a thin layer of soil separating the upper pieces from the lower. Thatch as well as fired daub rubble was located underneath, around, and over the sherds. A sample of carbonized maize associated with this burning event returned an AMS date of  $446 \pm 38$  B.P. (Table 4.1). This is the latest date

recovered from any neighborhood context at Parchman. The whole pots do not appear to have been inside a structure at the time that it burned. I suspect that they were sitting outside a structure located to the south, perhaps along the structure wall or within a small patio or work space located adjacent to a house.

#### *Neighborhood 4 Excavation*

A 1x1 m test unit was placed in Neighborhood 4 to ground-truth a geophysical anomaly initially thought to represent a midden-filled pit based on its size and the strength of its magnetic signature (Figure 5.18). The unit was excavated during the summer of 2010 by the author with the help of graduate student volunteers from the University of Mississippi. The test excavation

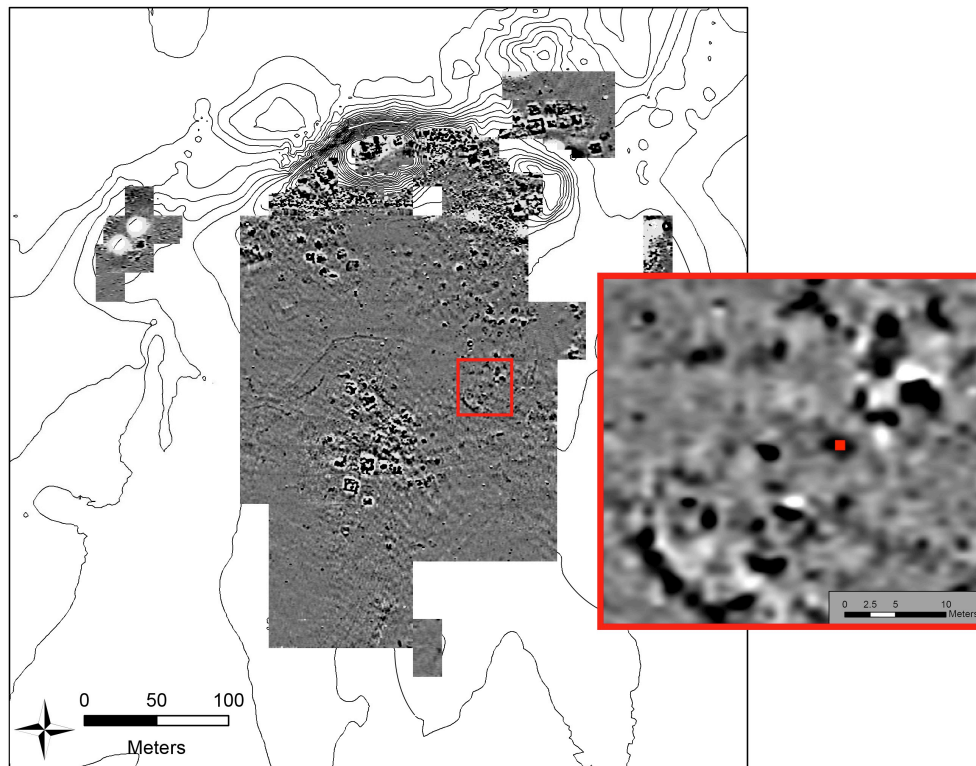


Figure 5.18. Location of Neighborhood 4 excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511), shown in red in inset.

did not reveal the expected pit feature, but rather a series of two superimposed living surfaces with evidence of burned Mississippian structures. The following narrative describes the findings of the excavation from the bottom up (Figure 5.19).

The first occupation here is represented by a partially fired floor surface and associated wall trench constructed directly upon the sterile sandy clay subsoil. The wall trench bounds the floor on its south side and bisects the unit on an east-west line (Figure 5.20). Though not visible in plan view, the wall trench continues into the east wall of the unit underneath intrusive post and pit features. The floor itself takes up the northern half of the unit; it is fired hard towards the northeast and unfired but compacted towards the northwest. The southern half of the unit falls outside the structure. Unusually for Parchman, this structure is slightly sunken—that is, the fired

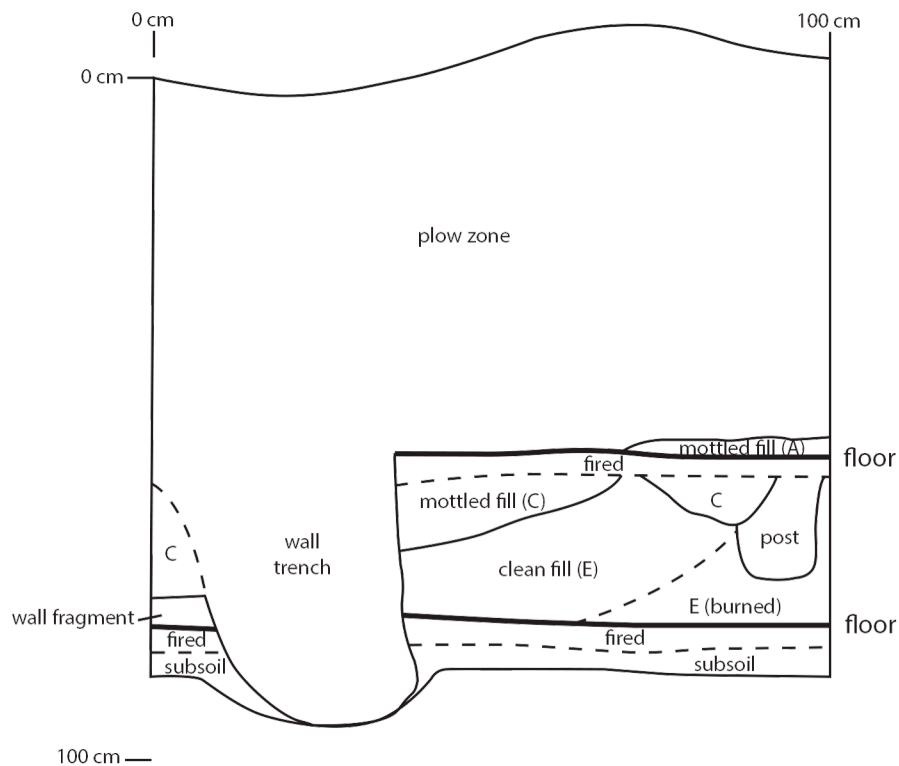


Figure 5.19. North profile of Neighborhood 4 excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).



Figure 5.20. Neighborhood 4 excavation. A fired floor associated with the earlier of two structures is visible in the northern portion of the photo; its associated wall trench bisects the photo from east to west. The more prominent wall trench, oriented NW-SE is associated with the later of two structures. North is toward the top of the photo.

floor surface is roughly 15 cm lower than the subsoil located adjacent to it towards the south.

Possibly, this indicates that the location was prepared by removing some of the subsoil to create a level building surface. Alternatively, the building could have been located adjacent to a natural ridge created by the flooding action that resulted in the site's ridge and swale topography.

Though not fired as hard as most other structures located at Parchman, the building was cleaned prior to its destruction by fire, following the familiar pattern. A small fragment of fired wall and a burned beam were found lying on the floor surface in the northwest corner. Following the deposition of these burned structural remains, two zones of clean sandy fill (zones C and E) were placed over the top of the floor while it was still somewhat hot—both zones have evidence

of oxidation and reduction where they are in contact with the floor. The surface of the later fill zone created a level platform for a new structure floor.

The second floor is located approximately 50 cm below the surface of the excavation in the northeast corner of the unit (Figure 5.19). A wall trench as well as a small pit feature with three zones of ashy fill are associated with it. The wall trench is well-defined and bisects the unit on a northwest-southeast line (Figure 5.20), indicating that this later structure was built without reference to the orientation of the earlier one. The southwest corner of the unit falls outside the limits of the structure.

Though this structure was also clearly burned, there is no evidence of the fired structural remains associated with that event. These may have fallen in a different direction, or alternatively, they may have been displaced by plowing. The only additional evidence of stratigraphy that survived the plowing is a post that superimposes the wall trench associated with the second structure (not visible in profile). Its association is unclear. It could represent a rebuild of the structure or could be evidence of an additional construction. Very few artifacts were recovered in association with this unit and all building episodes have been combined into a single analysis unit (A) for the purposes of analysis.

#### *A-B Swale Excavation*

A trench was excavated in the swale between Mounds A and B (henceforward known as the “A-B Swale”) in order to investigate a geophysical anomaly in this location interpreted as a burned Mississippian structure on the basis of its size, shape, and magnetic signature (Figure 5.15). The excavation primarily consists of five 1 x 1 m excavation units forming a trench oriented east-west, though additional units were opened to expand the main trench in order to

recover internal structural features of one of the burned structures. The excavation was conducted during the summers of 2004 and 2005 and was supervised by Glenn Strickland, then a graduate student at the University of Mississippi. He was assisted by undergraduate members of the UM summer field school. The results of the A-B Swale excavation were the subject of an M.A. thesis by Strickland (2009). Portions of his analysis are included here, though my interpretations of the stratigraphy (based on re-examination of excavation level notes, profile maps, and photographs) differ slightly from his (see Strickland 2009: 116-119 for his summary of events). The following details my interpretation of the stratigraphy from the base of the excavation up (Figure 5.21). Where discrepancies exist between my interpretation and Strickland's, I have made note of them.

Strickland (2009:116) states that a portion of the excavation reached what appeared to be undisturbed natural levee deposits (though they were not recorded on excavation level forms or on plan or profile maps). He goes on to say that the first episode of construction here consists of an addition of "mound fill" sitting on the original ground surface and that there was no evidence of a pre-mound midden. However, the earliest stratum (zone G) is labeled "midden" on the excavation profile map and at least some portions of it are artifact-rich, though other portions are described on level forms as having low artifact density. It is possible that some internal stratigraphy was missed during recording/mapping, or that the artifact-rich portion is actually a feature within the zone described as midden, perhaps the post-like feature labeled zone I. I surmise from all of this that the earliest cultural zone here is redeposited fill, possibly basket-loaded since it seems to be variable in terms of artifact density. Alternatively, portions of it could represent primary deposits. An AMS sample of carbonized pecan shell from this zone returned a date of  $609 \pm 39$  B.P. (Table 4.1), the earliest date reported for any context at Parchman.

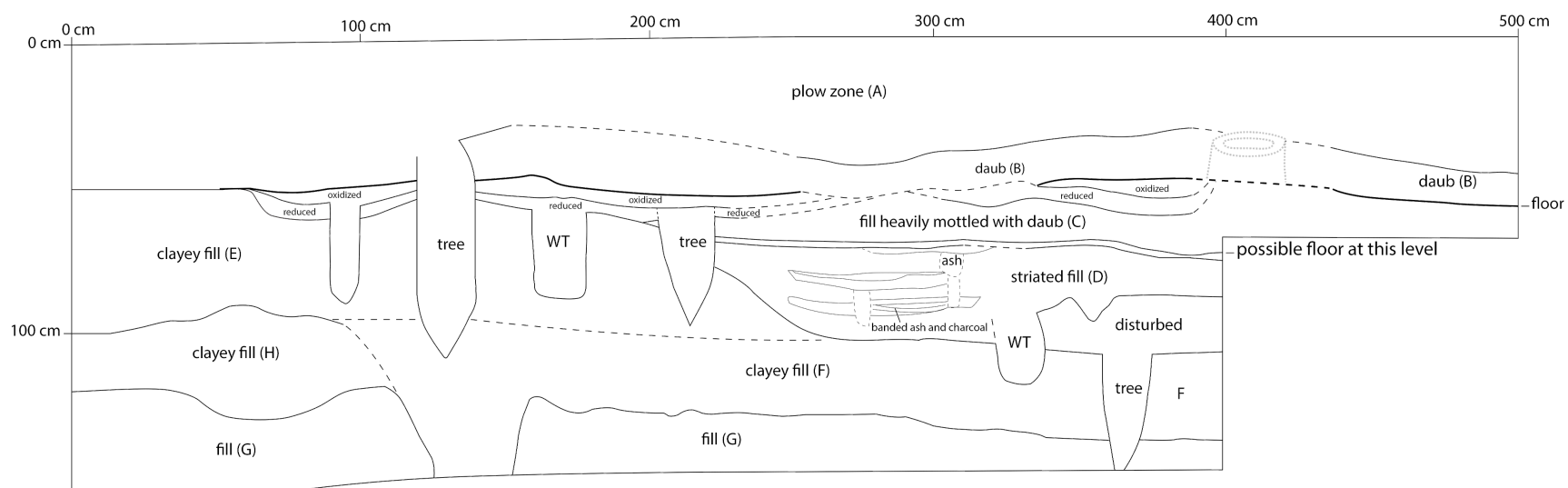


Figure 5.21. North profile of A-B swale excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).

Following the first stage, multiple layers of clayey fill were deposited (zones H, I, F, and E), effectively raising the ground surface about 70 cm above the surface of the underlying fill (which, according to the profile map, is at least 35 cm deep). Strickland (2009:116) interprets this as the building of a low house mound and this is certainly a plausible interpretation. Though the 1940 LMS map does not show a discrete house mound in this location, it does indicate that the swale between Mounds A and B was artificially raised (Figure 5.1). The clayey fill layers can be divided into at least two depositional events, as evidenced by an ashy deposit and a number of pottery sherds lying on the surface of zone F. A possible feature, presumably a post, probably originates at the surface of zone F. Its western boundary was tentatively identified in profile, though its eastern boundary was not. Unit level forms describe the area as rich in fish and small animal bones as well as small pottery sherds. In my reconstruction of the construction sequence, zone H, to the west of the feature, and zone F, to the east of the feature, are stratigraphically equivalent (and probably composed of the same fill), while zone E was deposited later. In Strickland's interpretation, zones E and F were not separated and presumably both superimpose zone H.

The addition of zone E in the western portion of the profile resulted in a raised area or platform adjacent to a lower area defined by the upper surface of zone F. The next episode of construction raised this low area to approximately the same height as the adjacent area to the west. Designated "zone D" in Figure 5.21, this construction episode actually represents a number of discrete deposits. These "striated" fill zones consist of a number of thin stratified deposits, most of which are artifact-rich. Some deposits are ashy, while others have discrete deposits of ceramics and/or mussel shell. Inexplicably, this series of deposits is not described by the excavators, though plan and profile maps indicate the complicated nature of the stratigraphy in



this location. According to Strickland's M.A. thesis (2009:116), a structure was built on top of these deposits and later burned. Again, inexplicably, I find no mention of a structure in this location on the excavation level forms. Nor is a floor or any other definitive structural remains mapped in plan view or in profile. The only possible indication of this structure that was recorded is a post or wall trench mapped in profile within zone D. Although its upper boundaries cannot be identified, it must have originated within or at the surface of the series of deposits designated zone D. Though I am willing to concede the presence of a structure here, the lack of recorded evidence regarding its nature (or even its presence) is baffling.

Atop this presumed structure, the next fill zone (zone C) consists of 10-20 cm of clayey soil heavily mottled with daub, forming a platform upon which a second structure was built. This structure consists of a floor surface that was fired hard upon its destruction along with interior structural features, including a post with a clay "collar" or reinforcement at its base (Figure 5.22). This reinforcement, affectionately known as the "whatsit," is approximately 17 cm tall and 25 cm in diameter and consists of a thickness of clay molded around an interior post. The whatsit was preserved by firing when the building was destroyed, and the portion of the interior post that was set into the floor was also preserved by carbonization. Other structural remains include "a series of wall trenches" (Strickland 2009:117), at least one of which is visible in the north profile though it was not identified as such in the excavation notes. In a departure from most episodes of house destruction at Parchman, a nearly complete but smashed Mississippi Plain jar was in direct contact with the floor (Figure 5.23), having been left behind when the building was destroyed. Strickland (2009:117) also reports evidence of woven matting on the floor. Apparently, this evidence consists of cane impressions pushed directly into the floor surface, though the cane itself was not preserved. It is also possible that wall daub with cane impressions (commonly



Figure 5.22. Clay collar surrounding a post associated with the most recent structure floor in the A-B swale excavation at Parchman Place.



Figure 5.23. Excavation and reconstruction of ceramic jar associated with the most recent structure floor in the A-B swale excavation at Parchman Place (22CO511).

found in other locations at Parchman) was mistaken for a portion of the floor. A sample from the burned post associated with the structure returned an AMS date of cal 570  $\pm$  60 B.P. (Table 4.1).

As a result of the later house's destruction, the structure floor as well as the post collar or "whatsit" were fired hard and a characteristic pattern of oxidation and reduction of the floor is visible in profile. Additionally, a thick layer of fired daub (zone B) was deposited on the floor surface, smashing the aforementioned Mississippi Plain jar that was left behind, and surrounding the fired whatsit. This is the last discernible cultural stratum in the sequence, as the overlying 30-50 cm of fill have been disturbed by plowing.

Though the excavation revealed as many as six episodes of construction, I have collapsed these into three analysis units for the purposes of artifact analysis. Fill zones G, H, I, F, and E were combined into Analysis Unit A, though they actually represent as many as three building episodes. Analysis unit A (AB\_A in the correspondence analysis presented in Chapter 3) contained an "intermediate" ceramics assemblage—having characteristics of both domestic and serving assemblages distinguished by the correspondence analysis. The striated fill designated zone D and the mottled fill overlying it (zone C) were combined into Analysis Unit B, though they represent two distinct stages of construction, apparently separated by an episode of house construction. Analysis unit B (AB\_B) contained a jar-dominated ceramics assemblage. The structural remains, overburden, and plow zone (zones A and B) constitute analysis unit C.

### **Residential Occupation at Parchman**

Gradiometer survey, supplemented by controlled surface collections, the LMS plane-table map, and the MDAH survey, gives us a general picture of off-mound residential areas on or

near the surface at Parchman, including five relatively discrete residential areas or neighborhoods, and as many as eight house mounds, at least one of which has now been identified through coring and excavation. Figure 5.24 shows the locations of house features identified in the geophysical data as well as those reconstructed by plotting surface daub scatters in ArcGIS. These features are overlaid on (a.) the 1940 LMS map to show their locations relative to the house mounds and other site features that are no longer present, and (b.) a topographic map to illustrate the relationship among present-day site features. Radiocarbon dates from excavated neighborhood contexts are presented in Figure 5.25 (see also Table 4.1).

In this chapter, I identified a number of residential practices that speak to issues of identity and community building activities that were ongoing at Parchman. These include the arrangement of space within neighborhoods and within the site as a whole, as well as an unusual

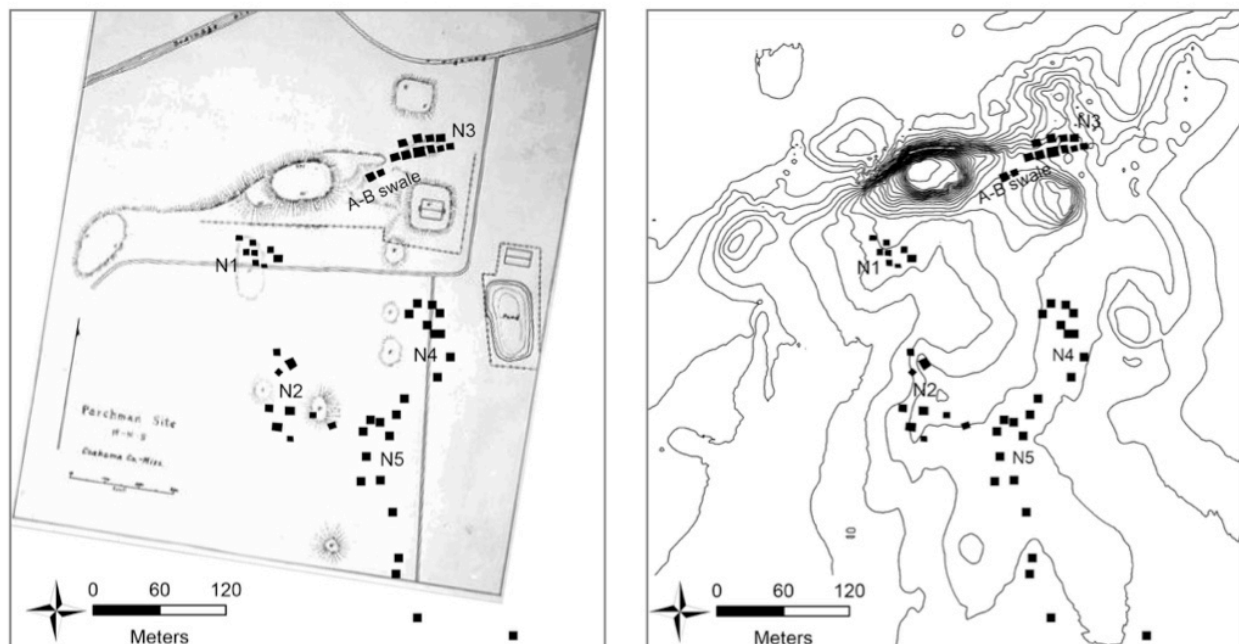


Figure 5.24. All house features identified at Parchman Place (22CO511) overlaid on (a.) 1940 LMS map and (b.) modern topographic map. Maps are plotted at the same scale and orientation. Features in Neighborhoods 1, 2, 3, and the A-B swale are plotted to scale. Features in Neighborhoods 4 and 5 are not to scale.

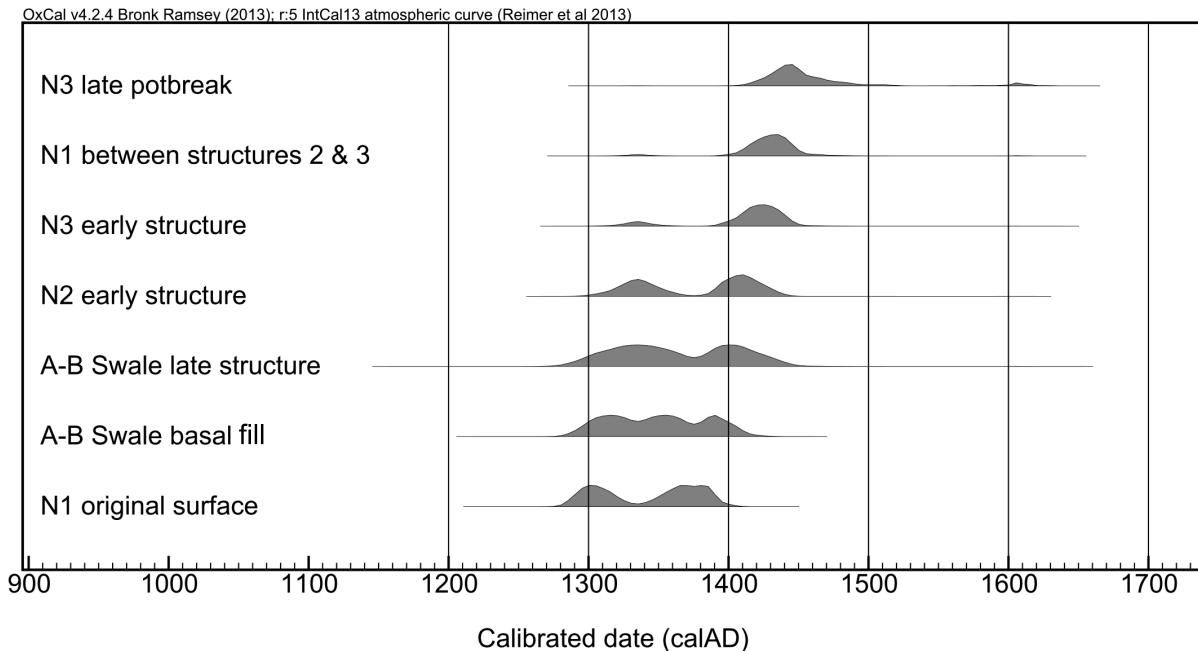


Figure 5.25. Calibrated radiocarbon dates from excavated neighborhood contexts at Parchman Place (22CO511). See also Table 4.1.

deposit in Neighborhood 1 consisting of large quantities of ash.

Of the five residential neighborhoods identified at Parchman, four are similar in that the houses and other buildings are arranged around central courtyards and the neighborhoods themselves are arranged around a large open plaza. The final neighborhood (Neighborhood 3) differs significantly in that it is located well away from the central plaza and its buildings are arranged on either side of a 3 m wide avenue or path. When overlayed on a topographic map (Figure 5.24b), it is apparent that the path in Neighborhood 3 is oriented directly toward a ramp extending from the Mound A summit. These spatial arrangements have several implications for understanding how people living at Parchman organized their community.

First, courtyard groups probably represent distinct sub-groups of the community that may be akin to the “house groups” of the historic period Chickasaw and Choctaw. If so, these groups

were probably composed of related women and their husbands and children. They likely made autonomous decisions at the household level about daily activities such as tending crops, gathering and hunting activities, cooking, maintenance of the household, etc. Many such tasks would have taken place within the shared space of the courtyard. Daily interaction and shared practice, then, were common and indicate that courtyards are group-focused, but at a fairly intimate scale.

Stepping back to look at the site as a whole, the notion of a central space is repeated in the plaza, a roughly five-hectare area that is both free of built architectural features and low in surface artifact density. Neighborhoods 1, 2, 4, and 5 are all located near the plaza, indicating shared use of the space by families or lineages residing in multiple courtyard groups. As with courtyard groups, the arrangement of neighborhoods around a shared public plaza also suggests a community-focused ideology, with residents facing inward and toward other community members.

Thus far, the mound-and-plaza site plan described above, with residential areas flanking the plaza, is a fairly expected pattern for a Mississippian settlement and has analogs among historic period Native American communities in which multiple clan-based lineages resided together in a town. Recall, however, that the defining feature of a town is shared ceremonial practice, rather than shared physical space. In addition to certain mound building practices discussed in Chapter 4, I believe the ashy deposits located in the Neighborhood 1 excavation constitute evidence of shared ceremonial practice among community members at Parchman. In particular, the deposition of large quantities of ash in a single location bears a resemblance to the cleaning and disposal of ash during community renewal ceremonies practiced annually by numerous historic period Native communities. The maintenance of sacred fire and proper

disposal of its residues was and is a significant way of restoring balance in the world and within the community for many southeastern Indians, and the collection and disposal of large quantities of ash in Neighborhood 1 suggests that this was important for community members at Parchman as well.

Returning to the idea of spatial practice, it is clear that Neighborhood 3 does not fit the pattern described for other neighborhoods. First, its location is unexpected in that it lies outside the mound-and-plaza configuration that is typical for the time period. By building in this area, residents differentiated themselves spatially and visually from the rest of the community. Second, Neighborhood 3 differs from the others in its internal organization. Rather than being arranged around a shared central space, houses here are organized in tightly spaced rows, with a three-meter wide corridor running between them. The association of Neighborhood 3 and Mound A via the path that connects them suggests that residents of Neighborhood 3 were primarily oriented visually and physically toward monumental architecture, rather than toward the rest of the community. I suggest that this orientation was social as well.

While these observations regarding spatial practice at Parchman are based primarily on near-surface (i.e. late) features, evidence from excavations within residential areas suggest that these spatial patterns were of significant duration and I now turn to a chronological reconstruction of neighborhood occupation at Parchman.

*Parchman I (14<sup>th</sup> century).* Radiocarbon dates from residential contexts indicate that plaza-adjacent neighborhoods (including houses in the A-B swale) were initially founded in the early to mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, essentially contemporaneous with early mound building contexts. By implication, the plaza configuration was also established at this early date. Multiple stacked houses in many of the neighborhoods indicate that occupation continued throughout the

Parchman I sub-phase. Dates from the A-B swale excavation suggest that occupation in this area of the site may have ended during the latter part of Parchman I.

*Parchman II (15<sup>th</sup> century).* Occupation of neighborhoods surrounding the plaza continued into the Parchman II sub-phase and we can infer that courtyard organization was in effect at this time, if not from the very beginning. At the same time the occupation of the A-B swale was ending, however, Neighborhood 3 was founded. I suggest, therefore, that the occupants of the A-B swale shifted their residence at this time to a location that was removed from the rest of the community. Interestingly, the ash deposits in Neighborhood 1 also date to the early Parchman II sub-phase. On the one hand, one sub-group of people emphasized social distinctions between themselves and others by physically separating themselves from the rest of the community. On the other hand, many or perhaps all segments of the population also participated in world-renewal ceremonies focused on maintaining and restoring balance within the community. Excavations in Neighborhood 3 suggest that its internal organization and thus, the orientation of its central path, were established at its founding. Overall, the occupation at Parchman spans a relatively short period, roughly 200 years, and Neighborhoods 1, 2, and 3 were occupied simultaneously for much of that time. However, the late date from Neighborhood 3 and a higher frequency of late ceramic types (notably painted polychrome vessels) in surface collections suggest that occupation in Neighborhood 3 may have continued after other neighborhoods had been abandoned.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

In this chapter, I tie together the threads of previous chapters in order to paint a picture of community life in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century northern Yazoo Basin. First, I consider ways the people of Parchman practiced community making at multiple scales, beginning with the most intimate (neighborhoods) and moving through progressively larger scales, including the town, the region, and the Mississippian world. Then I consider how the community at Parchman changed over time, focusing on mound building, residential activities, and community-building practices and how these changed over the course of the site's occupation.

#### **The Parchman Community: Considering Multiple Scales**

In Chapters 4 and 5, I presented excavation data from mound and residential contexts at Parchman, as well as spatial data based on the results of geophysical survey, mapping, excavation, coring, and surface collecting activities at the site. I argued that many principles of kinship, social structure, and patterns of residence among historic period Southeastern Indian groups have relevance for understanding late prehistoric communities in the northern Yazoo Basin. Here, I draw on these data to address the following question: What was it like to live with your nearest neighbors in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century Yazoo Basin?

### *Living in Your Neighborhood*

I argued in Chapter 5 that neighborhoods at Parchman can be understood as house groups akin to those of the historic period Chickasaw and Choctaw. If we accept this analogy, we can make some informed speculations regarding the social makeup of neighborhoods. Most nearby historic Indian groups were matrilineal, marriage was typically clan-exogamous, and residence was matrilineal. If this was also the case for people at Parchman, then the core of the social group associated with each courtyard group was composed of women who were related to one another and who belonged to the same clan. Also resident were children of these women and their unmarried male relatives, also members of the matrilineage (and clan). Married men (with different clan affiliations) residing with their wives would be considered unrelated. It is likely in this scenario that women had a lot of decision-making power regarding the day-to-day goings-on at the neighborhood level. This may be one context in which women (perhaps especially older women) exercised as much or more influence than men. As Sullivan (2006) and others have pointed out, Mississippian scholars have tended to privilege male leadership in their interpretations, though women had considerable political influence among many historic period groups (e.g. Perdue 1999).

Most house groups at Parchman are organized around shared, central spaces—individual houses around courtyards, and house groups around a central plaza. This suggests that community members valued shared practice and cooperative decision-making—at least outwardly. Courtyards, for instance, are shared workspaces where daily activities such as food processing, cooking, and pottery and other types of craft production took place. They are also social spaces—places where people share food and gossip, tell stories, plan their days, and instruct their children and grandchildren. They are literally and figuratively the center of social

life for small groups. As domestic spaces, they were designed and maintained by members of the house group, who negotiated the terms of their use with one another. Though these negotiations were likely shaped by individual experiences based on gender, age, work, and status differences, the daily activities of people sharing courtyard space were necessarily intertwined (Robin 2002:257).

Neighborhood 3 may also represent a house group, as the concept does not seem to have been tied to any particular arrangement of houses. However, the building of houses in rows with intervening corridors or paths does imply different possibilities for interaction at the local level. While courtyards and plazas are center spaces that promote the gathering of people, paths promote mobility. Snead *et al.* (2006:xv) tell us that “trails, paths, and roads are the manifestation of human movement throughout the landscape and are central to an understanding of movement at multiple scales.” In addition to enabling physical movement by linking people with places and things, I suggest the path in Neighborhood 3 symbolizes the upward social mobility of those associated with it.

The orientation of the path is significant. Unlike other neighborhoods at Parchman, there is no evidence for shared central workspace that could serve as a focal point for social life—the size and shape of the path suggest that this was not its primary function. Rather, for those living in Neighborhood 3, the path serves as a spatial orientation, connecting residents to an earthen monument that dwarfs all others on the site. Anyone using the path would have a direct line of sight west toward the mound summit and any activities that were taking place there. Significantly, the path also represents a social orientation, pointing to the locus of communal activity for the people living in this part of the site. The focal point of people living here was not

inward toward courtyards, as with other social groups living at the site, but toward monumental architecture and the various meanings people associated with it.

### *Living in Your Town*

Changing the scale to look at the site as a whole, we can think of the community at Parchman as similar in many ways to historic period Indian towns. Evidence for mound building activities, spatial organization at the site level, and shared ceremonial practice supports this interpretation.

Radiocarbon dates indicate that mound building and residential activities first took place in the early part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and that they were concurrent. Bowl-dominated ceramics assemblages associated with the earliest mound building stages further suggest that activities related to the initiation of mound building involved large-scale feasting on the part of community members. Furthermore, differences in the types of bowls used for serving in different contexts indicate that multiple distinct segments of the population took part in the feasting events. The use of non-local carinated and restricted bowls by one of these segments suggests that they had social ties to Mississippian groups in the southern Yazoo Basin or Natchez Bluffs region, perhaps based on kinship or trade relationships. Finally, the inclusion of a bundle burial in the early stages of mound building can be interpreted as a founding event. Burials are rare indeed at Parchman and as this one happened at the very outset of Parchman's settlement, it is likely that the bundled remains were transported from elsewhere and that their burial at Parchman was tied to the founding of the community. All of this suggests that mound building and the activities associated with it are related to the founding of a town *in a particular place*. I will return to this point momentarily.

The arrangement of constituent parts of the community around a central space appears to be an equally important component of the establishment of Parchman. Early dates from residential areas of the site indicate occupation in Neighborhoods 1 and 2 as well as the A-B swale at the beginning of Parchman's occupational history, and it is probable that Neighborhoods 4 and 5 were also founded at this time. This means that from the beginning of Parchman's occupation, the overall site plan was analogous to the organization of historic period towns, wherein a number of distinct house groups maintained a shared ceremonial practice along with the facilities that enabled it (e.g. ball courts, square grounds, etc.) (Lewis *et al.* 1998). Here, of course, house groups were built in spatially discrete locations but organized in reference to site features such as mounds and, particularly, the plaza. This "package deal" suggests that the town itself may have existed prior to locating in this place. We know that the identity of a town is *not* defined by physical space but rather is composed of individuals and their shared practice. However, acts of feasting and mound building, as well as the establishment of a plaza, suggest that *place-making* is an important process of community-building at this scale.

If the analogy between Parchman and historic period Indian towns can be relied upon, then we can infer that the population at Parchman was composed of multiple lineages with different clan affiliations. While clans (and their more localized manifestations, house groups) operated as autonomous social entities, we also know that they had distinct and complementary ritual roles and that they were ranked with respect to one another, but that the rankings were not static. Rather, they were continually negotiated (Knight 1990).

Evidence for shared ceremonial practice at Parchman comes in a number of forms. In addition to community-wide feasting events associated with the initiation of mound building (discussed above), mound building itself was embedded within community values related to

wholeness and balance, as evidenced by the inclusion of special substances such as ash, kaolin, and mussel shell in mound construction stages (see discussion below). Additionally, I interpret the layers of redeposited ash adjacent to Neighborhood 1 in terms of community and world renewal ceremonialism related to the intentional disposal of old (“polluted”) fire in preparation for the new fire (again, see discussion below) These interpretations suggest that individuals at Parchman participated in shared ritual action that was community-wide in scope.

Finally, the manipulation of the site plan late in Parchman’s history suggests that the inclusive ideals expressed by founding events and other ceremonial practices were not shared by everyone or that they can become less important in certain situations. One group in particular distinguished themselves from others by building away from the plaza and orienting their neighborhood towards monumental architecture. This happened sometime *after* the town was founded and suggests that the cooperative ideals espoused in the rest of the site plan were not shared by everyone and that spatial practice could be used to manipulate these ideals. Abandonment of the site soon after suggests that this manipulation was not to everyone’s liking.

### *Living with Authority*

In Chapter 4, I presented data on mound excavations in order to investigate how acts of mound building and associated activities reveal the ways that leadership and authority were enacted at Parchman. One of the hallmarks of Mississippian societies is the presence of hereditary leaders whose association with mounds and especially mound summits is well established. As with many other Mississippian sites, the leaders of the Parchman community were physically and symbolically elevated above others by virtue of their residence on mound summits. Certain aspects of the mound building sequence provide clues about the big-picture

trajectory of changing power relations over the course of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Others reveal the process of negotiation that accompanied mound building and the worldview within which these processes took place. In addition to the founding events discussed above, mound building at Parchman included acts of mantle construction, building and dismantling of summit structures, veneering, truncation, and incorporation, all of which indicate some of the ways in which power and authority were enabled and constrained.

I have argued that individual mounds at Parchman were associated with particular sub-groups of the population—in effect, that lineages associated with each house group built and maintained their own mound. Mound E was constructed following a repeating pattern of mantle construction alternating with the building and use of summit structures. The destruction and burial of these structures after a period of use initiated the next episode of mantle construction. Generally speaking, the repeated sequence of building, use, destruction, and burial of mound top structures on Mound E (and probably Mounds A and B) indicates a remarkable degree of continuity through time. It seems, then, that the rules regarding succession of lineage leaders were well established and happened smoothly throughout Parchman's early history. Additionally, early in the site's history, individual mounds were of comparable size, suggesting that leaders from several sub-groups may have shared power equally, or perhaps had different but equally esteemed forms of authority. Only later did one lineage assert a dominant leadership role by dramatically increasing the size of their mound.

While these circumstances indicate some ways leadership was enabled by mound building traditions, others suggest that authority was also constrained by actions that emphasize community values related to wholeness and balance. In a number of instances, special substances such as white clay, ash, and mussel shell were incorporated into the mounds at Parchman,

sometimes deposited on mound surfaces and sometimes as mound fills or facings. A thick layer of ash, for instance, was placed above the bundled burial of an adult male located at the base of Mound A. Loaded ash and/or white sediment was also used as fill in an intermediate mound stage in the Mound E southwest slope trench. Mussel shell was found on the initial surface of Mound E and in a number of other locations. Kaolin, a white-colored fine silty clay, was used (along with ash) in the final stage of mound construction identified in the Mound E southwest slope trench and was the main component (along with both ash and mussel shell) of the white veneer maintained for some period of time on an intermediate surface of Mound E.

Like the burning and burial of mound-top structures, the white mound veneer and other instances of special inclusions can be interpreted as ritually significant. For many southeastern Indian groups, the color white has associations with purification and renewal, as well as peace, wisdom, breath, sky, and purity. (Hudson 1976:226; Knight 1986:678; Pursell 2004:147). The use of this color in the form of clay sediments, redeposited ash, and crushed mussel shell may therefore represent an extension of the burning/burial phenomenon common at Parchman and other Mississippian sites. However, when considering Mississippian beliefs about the nature of the cosmos (see Chapter 1), the substances themselves and their depositional relationships to one another take on additional significance. Recalling Lankford's (2004, 2007) interpretation of Mississippian shell gorgets as cosmograms (Figure 1.2), we can understand each component of the white mound surface as referencing one of the three divisions of the Mississippian cosmos: ash, with similar connective and communicative properties as smoke (Jackson 2003), references a connection between this world and the above world. Crushed mussel shell references the Beneath World. By extension, clay is the representation of this world. When gathered together



(Bradley 1990, 1998; Mills 2008), these substances represent more than the sum of their parts. Mound building at Parchman was a matter of world building.

The unusual nature of the white veneer as well as its continued maintenance may correspond to some particularly trying event for the Parchman community (perhaps a contested succession), and this circumstance was counteracted by an extended focus on community purification and renewal during which some members of the Parchman community emphasized values related to wholeness and balance between complementary parts. Furthermore, those responsible for the truncation of Mound E intentionally removed a portion of the mound summit in order to re-expose the surface (or at the very least halted their cutting activities once it was reached). This is undoubtedly significant in and of itself and it reinforces the significance of the white mound surface and the meanings it held for those who created it. If the maintenance of a white mound surface can be interpreted in terms of corporate group values related to balance, wholeness, and renewal, then re-exposing the surface at a later date implies a desire on the part of those responsible to return to those values.

### *Living in the Region*

In this section I consider how Parchman is related to nearby sites and the ways in which its residents might interact with those of other towns. According to Phillips (1970), the Parchman phase consists of some 15 sites that are roughly contemporary based on surface collected ceramics assemblages. Unfortunately, for many sites, the early surface collections upon which the phase was defined still represent the sum total of archaeological work. Exceptions do exist, however. In addition to Parchman itself, a small number of sites with Parchman phase components have been investigated further. These include Wilsford (22CO516) (Connaway

1984a); Carson (22CO505) (Butz 2015; Carpenter 2013; Connaway 2015; James 2010, 2015; Lansdell 2009, McLeod 2015; Mehta 2015; Mehta et al. 2012); West (22CO520) (Buchner 1996, 2002; Dye and Buchner 1998); Salomon (22CO504) (Connaway 1983; Johnson et al. 2015); and Barbee (22CO510) (Walling and Chapman 1999).

Though this is not the place for an extensive review of Parchman phase sites, I do want to consider Parchman's relationship to two of those just mentioned—Salomon, located approximately 6.5 km to the northeast, and Carson, roughly 10.5 km to the southwest. LMS records indicate that Salomon and Parchman are structurally similar, Salomon having four large earthen platform mounds and a number of smaller mounds surrounding a plaza. Additionally, LMS surveyors reported house sites in the plowed field, which Brown (1978) and Connaway (1983) also observed, describing the plaza as circled by large concentrations of daub.

Limited test excavations conducted by the University of Mississippi in 2014 indicate that Mound A at Salomon is a Mississippi period construction with a Woodland period midden at its base. A radiocarbon date from mound fill returned a 13<sup>th</sup> century date, surprisingly early for a Parchman phase site, and preliminary ceramics analyses suggest that the Mississippian component predates the earliest occupation at Parchman (Jay Johnson, personal communication 2015). All of this begins to answer a long-standing question about the contemporaneity of closely spaced Parchman phase sites in the northern Yazoo. Rather than contemporaneous occupation, Salomon and Parchman were probably occupied sequentially. I suggest that the structural similarities between the two sites, their physical proximity, and their sequential ceramics assemblages and radiocarbon dates indicate a population shift from Salomon to Parchman around the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a situation perhaps analogous to the wholesale relocation of historic period towns in the early contact period. This pattern of

movement may have been typical for the region, given the number of similarly sized sites nearby.

While Salomon is similar to Parchman structurally, Carson is categorically different. The largest site in the region by an order of magnitude, the Carson site stretches for more than a mile. When it was first mapped in 1894, the site had seven large and 80 small mounds as well as an earthen embankment. Recent work at Carson indicates that mound building began during the early Mississippi period or slightly earlier, around AD 1000 (Carpenter 2013, Butz 2015, Mehta *et al.* 2012, Mehta 2015). At this time, the people of Carson were interacting with Mississippian people from Cahokia, near present day East St. Louis, Illinois. Evidence of this contact includes stone tools that are identical in material and manufacturing techniques to those from Cahokia (Johnson 1987), as well as pottery and architectural styles that are similar to those of Cahokia but unknown elsewhere in the Yazoo Basin (Butz 2015; Lansdell 2009, McLeod 2015). It is probable that this contact sparked significant social change in the region that would have affected nearby Mississippi period sites as well as Carson itself. In any case, Carson must be figured into a regional understanding of Parchman phase sites in the region. The question is how.

One clue may come from off-mound investigations at Carson, especially from the area surrounding Mound A that was once enclosed by the earthen embankment. In this part of the site, archaeologists have discovered houses, palisade walls, and large storage pits (McLeod 2015). There is also evidence of elaborate mortuary ritual in the form of charnal houses and communal burial pits (James 2010, 2015). James (2010) interprets the secondary burial of individuals at Carson as emphasizing the social importance of corporate groups, rather than some other form of social differentiation (based on status, age, etc.). Given the relative lack of burials found at Parchman, the elaborate mortuary program at Carson may indicate one way in which the sites

were connected. If people from the surrounding region were buried at Carson, that would indicate significant social integration and interaction among late Mississippian communities in the northern Yazoo.

### *Living in the Mississippian World*

There is good evidence that Mississippian people in the northern Yazoo Basin were aware of and connected with the greater Mississippian world. Lithic tools and raw materials, building styles, and mound construction techniques link the early Mississippian population at Carson with that of Cahokia, while carinated and restricted bowls found in 14<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Parchman indicate a connection with Mississippian centers in the southern Yazoo. These social connections can be considered both “real” and “ideological,” in the sense that the people in question shared not only material goods and practices but also a worldview within which their actions were meaningful.

As previously discussed, mound building was an important way that people at Parchman materialized their views about leadership, the community, and the Mississippian cosmos. Special substances such as ash, shell, and clay “created” the cosmos locally, in effect, *locating* the community within it. Acts of cleaning, burning, and burial are all related to ideas about cleansing, purification, and renewal in Southeastern Indian belief systems (Hudson 1976:126; Knight 1986:687). Additionally, smoke has sentient properties for Southeastern people, including the ability to communicate between the human and spirit worlds (Jackson 2003:74). Large quantities of smoke would be a significant, if fleeting, byproduct of the firing of mound top buildings and can be understood as an effort to communicate with Above World spirits about

earthly happenings. The production of smoke therefore may have been as important or more so than the preservation of carbonized and fired structural remains.

Excavations from Neighborhood 1 suggest that ritual action in off-mound areas is also relevant for understanding the relationship between local communities and the Mississippian cosmos. In Chapter 5 I described a series of white powdery ash deposits containing an abundance of charcoal, food remains, and pottery. The ash was clearly redeposited and not the result of burning in place. I suggested that the deposits were the remains of one or more cooking and/or eating events, possibly from individual household cooking hearths or from the remains of one or more larger gatherings. However, given the importance of ash generally and practices related to its disposal in particular, it is likely that the act of disposing of large quantities of ash in a designated location is as significant or more so than the remains of the food-related activities contained within it.

The ash deposits in Neighborhood 1 recall historic and modern accounts related to extinguishing the old “polluted” fire in preparation for the renewal of sacred fire during the annual busk or Green Corn Ceremony (e.g. Jackson 2003:198). I want to suggest that these remains represent the polluted remains of sacred fire—that is, the hearth scrapings of households and other contexts within the community that were gathered and deposited together in a specially designated location, perhaps analogous to the “ash heaps” shown on Swanton’s (1928c) map of a Kealedji square ground in Oklahoma (Figure 1.4). Within this conceptual understanding, a deposit that archaeologists might typically consider only as incidental “trash,” this substance takes on a more significant meaning (cf. Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2006). It is the first step in an annual rite, the purpose of which was literally to restore balance within the community and within the world.

## **The Parchman Community: Considering Change over Time**

In Chapter 2 of this work, I proposed to split Phillips's (1970:939-940) Parchman Phase into two sub-phases based on differing frequencies of ceramic types, attributes, and functional vessel classes found in 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century contexts at Parchman Place. Though ceramic phases do not usually coincide perfectly with other archaeological indicators of cultural change, they offer convenient frameworks within which to discuss how sites and the social groups that inhabited them developed over time. Radiocarbon dates from Parchman (Figure 6.1; see also Table 4.1) also separate roughly into two categories—those from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and those from the 15<sup>th</sup> century—though some of the later dates from mound summits may extend into the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. With this temporal framework in mind, I now turn to a reconstruction of Parchman's occupational history.

### *Parchman I*

The Parchman I sub-phase corresponds roughly to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It was during the early part of this period that people first moved to Parchman and I have argued that this initial settlement represents the relocation of a town, perhaps from a nearby site such as Salomon. The environmental setting would have included an oxbow lake created by one or more inactive channels of the Mississippi River, as well as smaller active streams such as Mill Creek, presently located to the west of the site. People no doubt chose this location to take advantage of the rich terrestrial and aquatic resources located nearby. Additionally, the site would have been ideal for the cultivation of maize and other crops due to the flood-enriched soil.

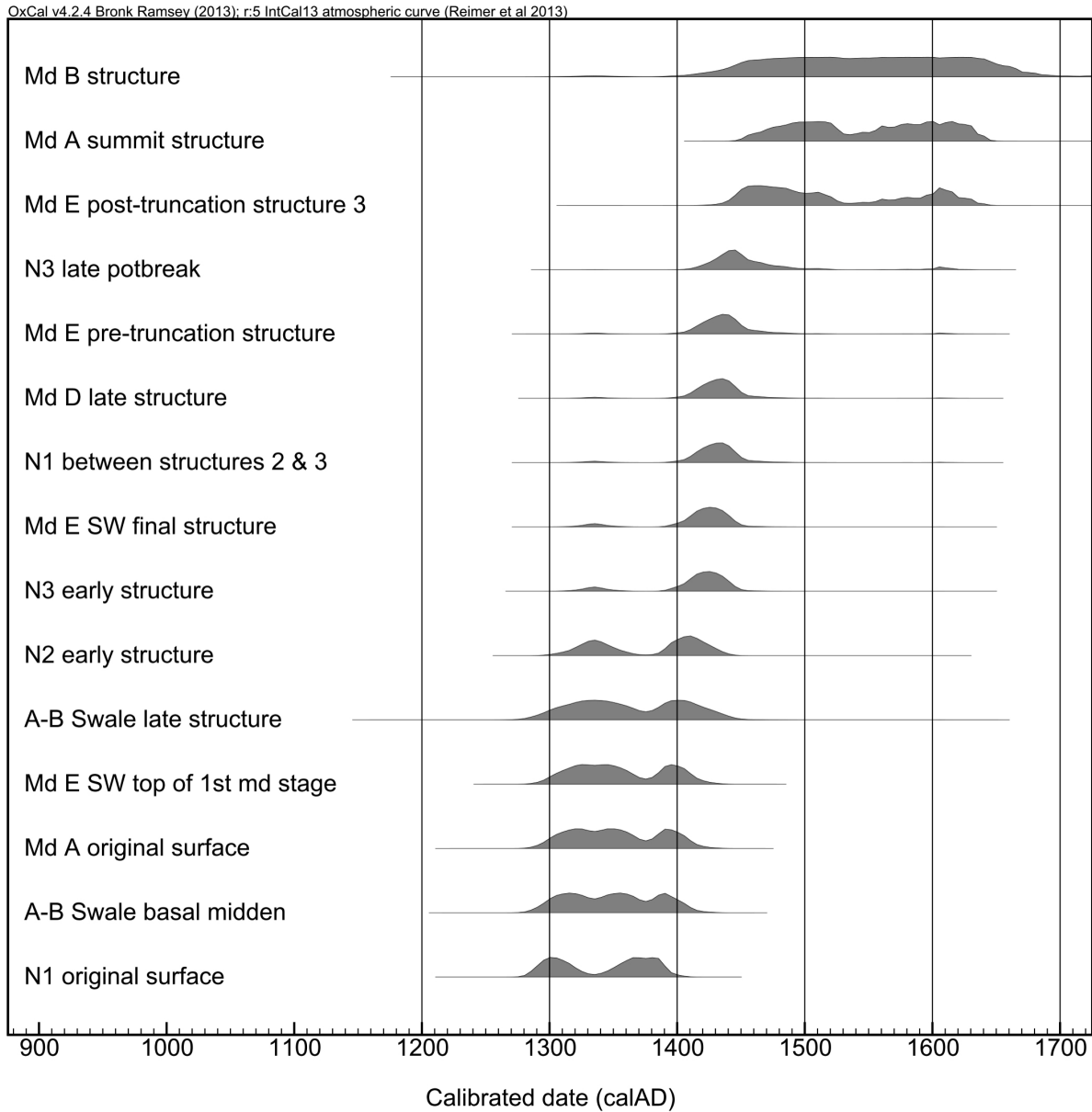


Figure 6.1. Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Parchman Place (22CO511). See also Table 4.1.

As soon as people moved to Parchman, they established a site plan that included a series of low earthen platform mounds built along the edge of the natural levee to the north as well as a large open plaza around which community members established their households. (Contexts for which we have direct evidence for early activity in the form of C14 dates are shown as shaded

areas in Figure 6.2). Each neighborhood or house group at Parchman probably belonged to a clan-based matrilineage, and each of these may have been affiliated with one of the small mounds at the site. In addition to the establishment of the site plan, the founding of the community also included large feasting events that happened in concert with mound building. From ceramic evidence we know that these feasts were characterized by the serving of large quantities of food, foods cooked in non-typical ways, and foods that may have been rare or

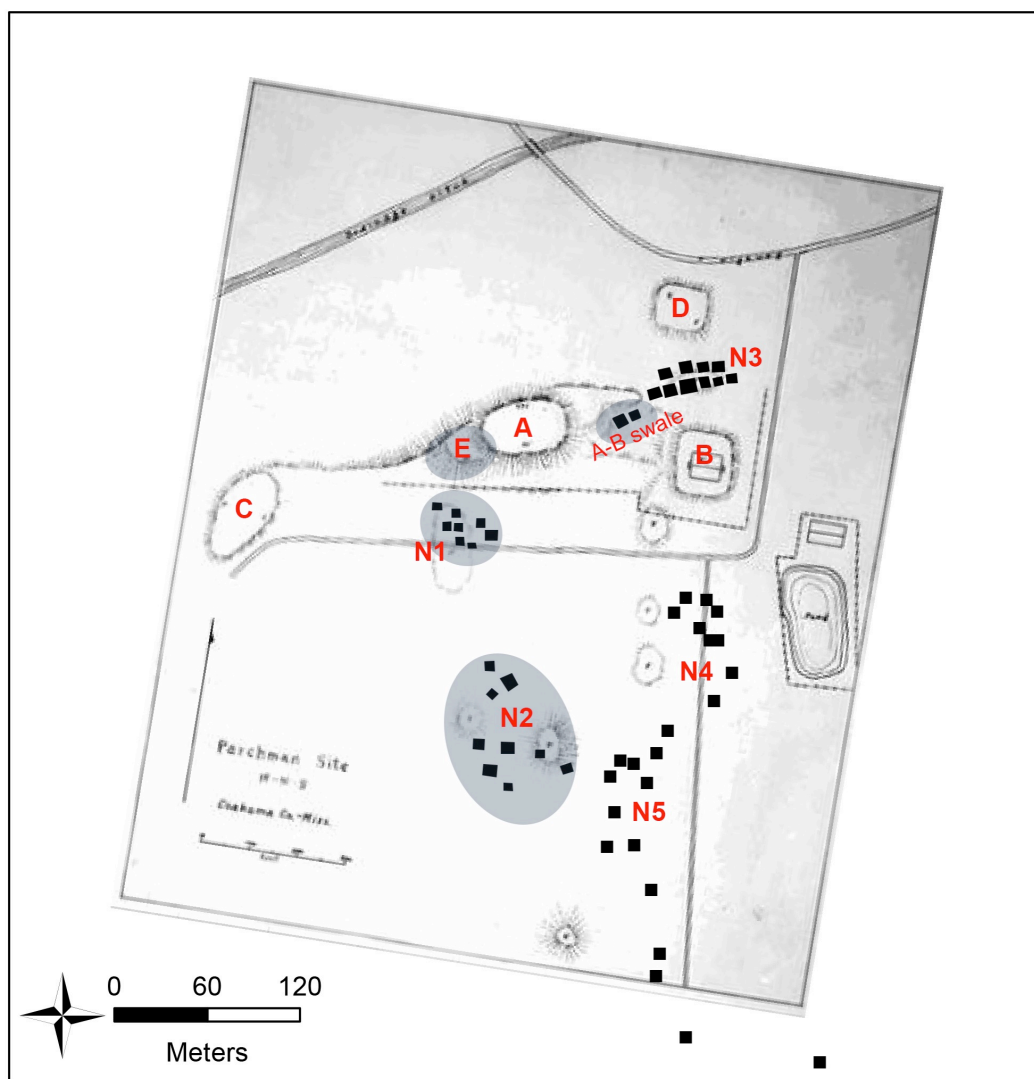


Figure 6.2. Parchman in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Shaded areas indicate locations of confirmed activity during the Parchman I sub-phase.



valuable. Some of the participants used specialized non-local serving vessels, drawing attention to their connection with Mississippian people in the southern Yazoo Basin or Natchez Bluffs region.

Once mounds were established, leaders of the community (presumably affiliated with the various matrilineages) resided in large houses atop the mound summits. When these houses were no longer occupied, they were cleaned out, burned, and then immediately buried, after which a new mound mantle was added and a new building constructed. Residences in off-mound areas of the site were also treated in this way. Throughout much of Parchman I, individual mounds were roughly equivalent in size, indicating that no one leader or corporate group had more authority than any other, or perhaps that different types of authority were balanced among them. Ceremonial activity during Parchman 1 also emphasized balance, as the ash heap deposits in Neighborhood 1 are likely related to community and world renewal rites.

### *Parchman II*

Activities associated with both mound and neighborhood areas continued into the Parchman II sub-phase, which largely coincides with the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 6.3). However, houses in the A-B swale were abandoned during the terminal Parchman 1 sub-phase, and Neighborhood 3 was founded soon after. It seems that those living in the A-B swale moved their neighborhood to a new location, one that was removed from the plaza and therefore isolated from other neighborhoods and those residing in them. Neighborhoods adjacent to the plaza continued to be occupied and we can infer from the geophysical data that the courtyard arrangement that characterizes these neighborhoods was in effect at this time. Given the sequential nature of buildings within each residential area, these neighborhood organizational

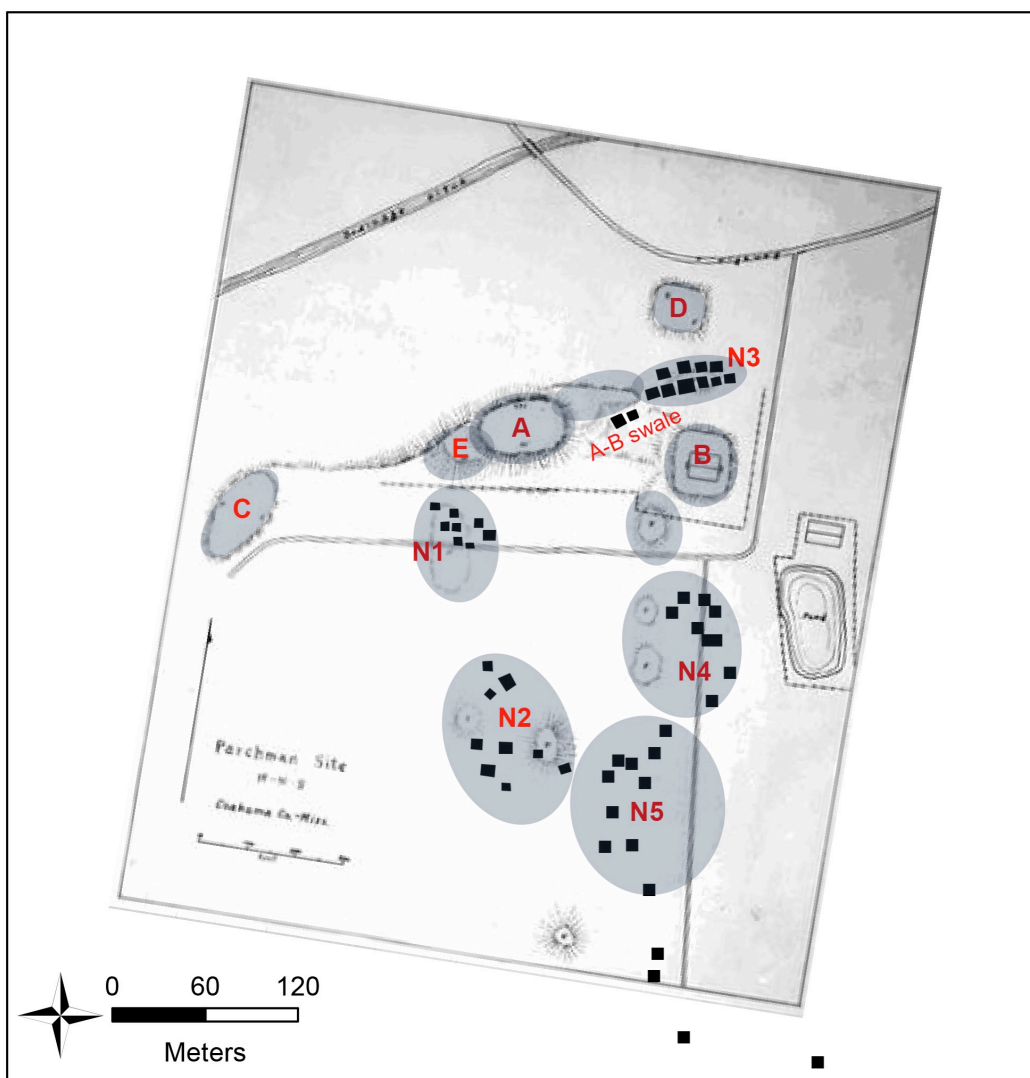


Figure 6.3. Parchman in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Shaded areas indicate locations of activity during the Parchman II sub-phase.

schemes were probably a continuation from Parchman I. In any case, during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, people living in Neighborhoods 1, 2, and perhaps 4 and 5 arranged their living spaces around shared central courtyards, while those living in Neighborhood 3 arranged their houses in tightly spaced rows separated by an avenue or path.

While mound-building practices in Mound E proceeded as usual for much of Parchman II, activities occurring near the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century indicate a significant disruption and/or

reorientation related to mound building and its goals. First, the builders of Mound E added a veneer made from layers of ash, mussel shell, and white kaolin that they maintained or renewed for some period of time before mound building resumed. Second, the builders truncated the mound, removing a number of mound stages and reducing its height to that of the white veneer. I have argued that these events may be related to a time of political instability at Parchman, perhaps one or more contested successions, and that the creation of the white veneer and its re-exposure reflect the desire of some community members to balance authority with community-focused values. Subsequent to this truncation, mound building continued as it had before, with a sequence of mound construction episodes associated with summit architecture.

Up until this point, Mounds E and A were separate constructions, presumably of comparable size. However, by the end of Parchman II (Figure 6.4), sometime in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century, we see the incorporation of Mound E and the rapid and dramatic expansion of Mound A. By this time, if not before, the people living in Neighborhood 3 had established a spatial relationship with Mound A by orienting the path separating houses there toward a ramp leading to the Mound A summit, an orientation that I argue is social as well as physical. I suspect that many if not all of the other neighborhoods were abandoned around this time. In any case, the site was entirely abandoned sometime in the early part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, so the increasingly hierarchical social relations implied by the dramatic expansion of Mound A were not in effect for very long.

Overall, Parchman was occupied for a relatively short period of time, roughly 200 years. Both mound building practices and town and neighborhood organization suggest that social negotiations were ongoing at Parchman, and that relationships among corporate groups that made up the community changed somewhat dramatically during the latter half of the 15<sup>th</sup>

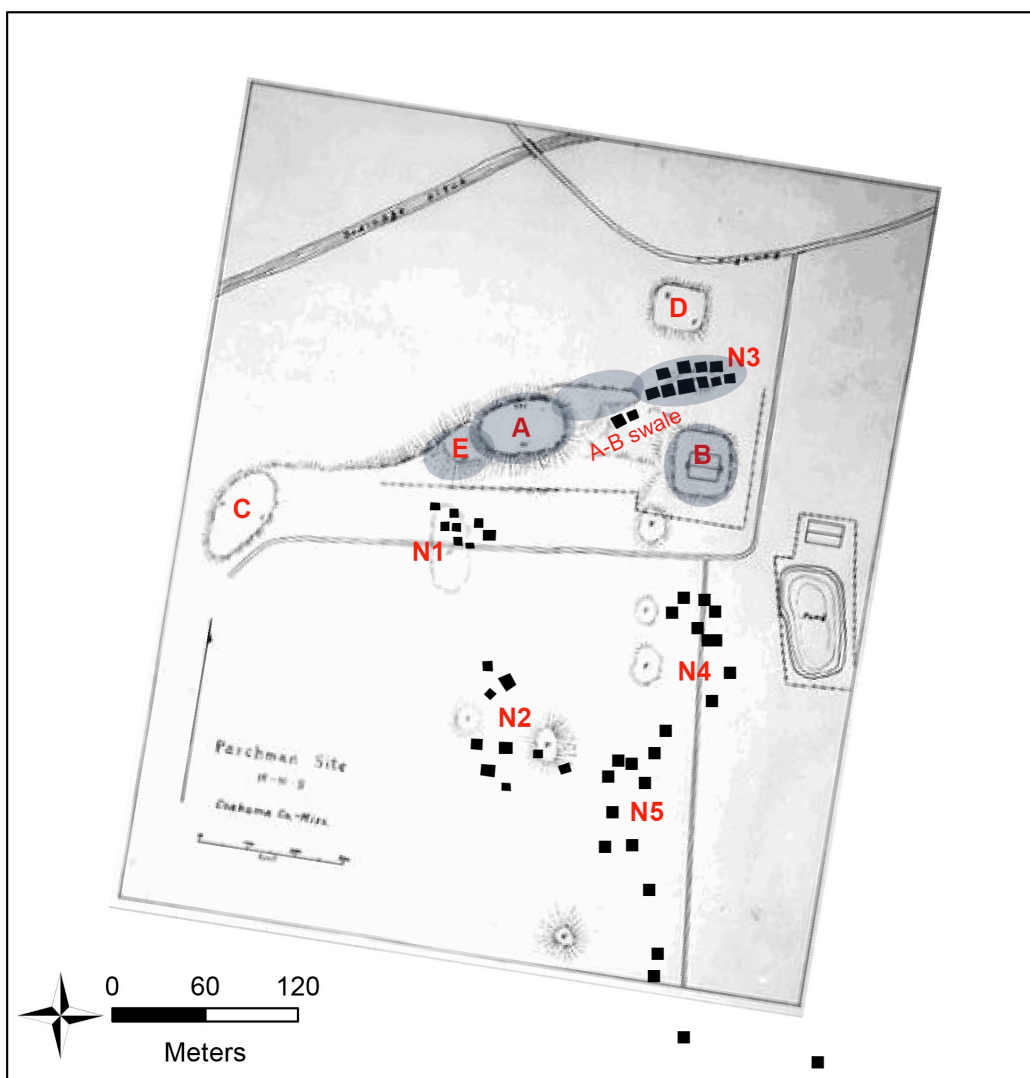


Figure 6.4. Parchman in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Shaded areas indicate locations of activity during the terminal Parchman II sub-phase.

century. The abandonment of the site in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century can be seen as a continuation of these negotiations. As the inhabitants of Parchman moved here as a group in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, they just as surely relocated in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century to one of the many sites in the northern Yazoo Basin that have yet to be fully understood.

## APPENDIX 1: TYPES AND VARIETIES

A type-variety classification of ceramic artifacts from Parchman Place was presented in Chapter 2. Within this binomial system of classification, ceramic types are groupings based on similarity in paste, temper, and decorative treatment. Varieties are variants of a type considered to have finer-scale chronological or spatial significance. Every sherd in the Parchman sample was classified according to type and when possible, to variety. Unlike types, however, varieties are not always sortable from sherds, either because the sherds in question are too small to display the requisite criteria, or simply because varieties grade into one another, making sorting rather arbitrary. In cases where varieties were not discernable, sherds were designated as *var. unspecified*. Appendix 1 presents criteria used to assign sherds to type and variety categories. Most of the following descriptions are based on Phillips et al. 1951; Phillips 1970; and Williams and Brain 1983. In what follows, I have grouped types and varieties according to their primary mode of decoration.

### Plain Wares

#### Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*

Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* is the ubiquitous coarse shell-tempered plain ware associated with the Mississippi period in the northern Yazoo Basin. The crushed shell particles used to temper the ware can range from small to quite large. Additionally, the ware is rather porous and often of a rough texture. Phillips et al. (1951:105) tell us that this type became increasingly popular throughout the Yazoo

region during the Late Baytown period and came to dominate Early Mississippi period assemblages. Phillips (1970:134) emphasizes its distribution in the northern Yazoo Basin and comparable areas west of the Mississippi River, as well as its dominance in the Late Mississippi period. This ceramic type is most often associated with a common vessel form referred to by Phillips et al. (1951:105) as the “standard Mississippi jar form,” but is also associated with bowls and to a lesser extent, with bottles as well. In addition to Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley’s Ferry*, some sherds were typed as Mississippi Plain *var. unspecified*.

#### Bell Plain *var. Bell*

Bell Plain *var. Bell* is a finer ware than Mississippi Plain and rather than storage and cooking jars, Bell Plain vessel forms tend toward bowls, plates, and bottles. The crushed shell used to temper Bell paste was often pulverized to the point that the shell particles are difficult or impossible to detect with the naked eye. Additionally, care was taken in the manufacture of Bell Plain *var. Bell* vessels to produce a smooth surface finish, and burnishing is also common. Phillips et al. (1951:126) tell us that Bell Plain is found in Late Baytown assemblages, but that it becomes a dominant type in the Early Mississippi period, increasing in dominance through the Late Mississippi period.

#### Baytown Plain *var. Baytown*

Baytown Plain is a clay- or grog-tempered plain ware, dubbed a “super-type” by Phillips (1970:48) because it is “too wide- ranging and long-lasting to be a pottery type.” Nonetheless, Baytown Plain is rare in Mississippian assemblages in the northern Yazoo Basin. Phillips et al. (1951:82) indicate that it was ubiquitous in the region up until the end of the Baytown period.

## Unidentified Plain

This is a catch-all category that includes all plain wares that are not well-described by the above plain ware categories. Unfortunately, this results in a category covering a lot of variation that would perhaps be better left separate. For instance, this category contains many sherds that do not appear to have temper inclusions, such as those associated with simple pinch pots. It also includes plain wares with paste characteristics and crushed shell inclusions that fall somewhere between Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* and Bell Plain *var. Bell* on the spectrum of shell-tempered wares.

## Incised Wares

### Barton Incised *var. Barton*

Barton Incised *var. Barton* (Phillips et al. 1951:114-119; Phillips 1970:43-45; Williams and Brain 1983:127) is an incised ware made on paste equivalent to Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*, with course shell as a tempering agent. Criteria for identification include multiple parallel incisions made with a sharp instrument on wet paste. Designs are simple rectilinear, most commonly line-filled triangles, more rarely cross-hatching, and occasionally line-filled triangles alternate with a curvilinear imbricated pattern. Traditionally, the decoration is confined to rims of “standard Mississippi jars with lug or strap handles” (Phillips 1970:43) while the main body of such vessels is undecorated. This variety is ubiquitous in the Northern Yazoo throughout the Mississippi period. Its frequency is often compared with that of Parkin Punctated in order

to make ceramic phase distinctions. Of the two, Barton peaks in frequency slightly before Parkin (Phillips et al. 1951:119).

Barton Incised *var. Estill*

Barton Incised *var. Estill* (Phillips et al. 1951:117-118; Phillips 1970:45-46. Williams and Brain 1983:127) is characterized in the literature as more southerly variety of Barton Incised. While the decorative idea is the same as for *var. Barton*, the execution of the incisions is more careful and more closely spaced, with parallel lines pitched at a steeper angle. Additionally, the line decoration may alternate with triangular zones of punctuation, though none in the Parchman sample do this. This variety is most common during the late Mississippi period in the lower Yazoo Basin.

Barton Incised *var. Midnight*

As with other varieties, Barton Incised *var. Midnight* (Brain 1969:188; Williams and Brain 1983:132; Brain 1989:140) consists of line-filled triangles on the upper portions of jars. However, both the vessels and the decoration are smaller in scale. Execution is careful and incisions tend to be close together. Brain (1969:188) describes *var. Midnight* as “essentially a process of miniaturization within Barton.” This variety is most common in the late Mississippi period in the lower Yazoo Basin.

Barton Incised *var. Togo*

Barton Incised *var. Togo* (Phillips 1970:46-47; Williams and Brain 1983:132) combines incising and punctuation as decorative motifs. Typically, designs consist of line-



filled triangles on upper vessel portions and thumbnail punctations on lower portions.

Paste is equivalent to Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*. *Var. Togo* commonly occurs in the Lower St. Francis Basin during the Mississippi period. (See Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin* for discussion of the difficulties inherent in sorting punctated sherds lacking rim portions).

#### Barton Incised *var. unspecified*

This is a catch-all category consisting of sherds that exhibit parallel incision on Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* paste, but are too small or eroded to identify to the level of variety.

#### L'Eau Noire Incised *var. unspecified*

L'Eau Noire Incised (Phillips 1970:100-101; Williams and Brain 1983:170-171) is made with a technique of dry-paste incision sometimes combined with excision. Designs consist of "distinct (interlocked) rectilinear patterns," which Williams and Brain (1983:170-171) consider unique in the Lower Valley. Phillips (1970:100-101) equates the design with "ware equivalent to Addis variety of Baytown Plain," however, Williams and Brain (1983) indicate that the design occurs on both clay-tempered and shell-tempered pastes. L'Eau Noire Incised is exceedingly rare in the Parchman sample. One example occurs on a fine, shell-tempered ware roughly equivalent to Bell Plain and is associated with an apparently unusual vessel shape for the type. While Williams and Brain equate L'Eau Noire Incised with carinated bowls and bottles, the example from Parchman occurs on a small constricted bowl, a vessel shape commonly associated with the Leland

Incised type (Steponaitis, personal communication 2014). L'Eau Noire Incised occurs in small numbers throughout the Yazoo Basin, the Natchez Bluffs and the Lower Red River during the Mississippi period.

#### Leland Incised *var. Unspecified*

Nine or more varieties have been described in the literature for Leland Incised (Phillips et al. 137-140; Phillips 1970:104; Williams and Brain 1983:171-179). Because of the small sample size at Parchman, I have chosen to classify all Leland Incised sherds as *var. unspecified*, though there is considerable variation among them. In general, Leland can be described as exhibiting polished-over, trailed curvilinear designs. That is, broad, shallow incisions made on leather-hard paste in curvilinear motifs, where the rough incised edges have been smoothed. At least one example from Parchman might be classified as *var. Deep Bayou* on the basis of “incisions of exceptional breadth (Williams and Brain 1983:175).” However, I have resisted the temptation to do so. Examples of Leland Incised in the current sample are associated with Bell Plain paste, though a small minority of examples are on a coarser paste than what is typically associated with Bell.

#### O'Byam Incised *var. Unspecified*

O'Byam Incised (Williams 1954:222-223; Phillips 1970:144) has a rather broad definition, including both broad line incision as well as incision “fine enough to qualify as ‘engraved’ (Phillips 1970:144).” Typically, the incision occurs on rims of shallow plates or bowls and is rectilinear, sometimes but not always consisting of line-filled triangles. It is associated with a Bell Plain paste. The distribution of O'Byam Incised is

centered in Southeast Missouri, western Kentucky and southern Illinois during the late Mississippi period. One instance of O'Byam Incised occurs in the Parchman sample, consisting of rectilinear fine-line incision ("engraving") on the interior of a bowl, though the rim is missing. Admittedly, in the absence of a rim, this classification could be considered dubious.

#### Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake*

Rhodes Incised *var. Horn Lake* (Phillips et al. 1951:127; Phillips 1970:157) is described by Phillips as exhibiting closely spaced trailed incisions in curvilinear motifs. The *Horn Lake* variety differs from *var. Ranch* in that the incising is done on a drier paste on a Bell Plain *var. Bell* paste (rather than the *Neeley's Ferry* paste of *Ranch*). It is associated with the late Mississippi period.

#### Winterville Incised *var. Winterville*

Winterville Incised (Phillips 1970:172-3; Williams and Brain 1983: 205-206) refers to curvilinear incised designs made with a sharp instrument on wet, coarse shell-tempered Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* paste. Closely related to Barton Incised, Winterville is more common in the southern Yazoo, but is fairly well represented at Parchman. Like Barton, the design is normally confined to the upper portions of Mississippian jars and is often carelessly executed. It is a ubiquitous type in the lower Yazoo Basin throughout the late Mississippi period.

#### Winterville Incised *var. unspecified*

I have used this category to include all sherds with curvilinear wet-paste incisions on *Neeley's Ferry* paste that were too small or eroded to be confidently identified as *var. Winterville*.

#### Walls Engraved *var. Walls*

In its most basic description, Walls Engraved *var. Walls* (Phillips et al. 1951: 127-129; Phillips 1970: 169-170) is associated with finely engraved designs often (but not always) utilizing zones of cross-hatching on Bell Plain *var. Bell* vessels. Design elements vary but are frequently associated with “Southern Cult” motifs in a style described as similar to that of Moundville (Phillips 1970:170). Though Phillips finds *var. Walls* associated most often with bottles, at Parchman it also occurs on bowls, often on both vessel interiors and exteriors. Additionally, on a few examples the design, while finely engraved, is rather crude in execution. Walls Engraved *var. Walls* is considered to be a late Mississippi period type of the Memphis subregion.

#### Walls Engraved *var. Hull*

The *Hull* variety of Walls Engraved (Phillips et al. 1951: 129; Phillips 1970: 170-171) differs from *var. Walls* in that it refers to an “imbricated” or fish scale pattern of fine engraving or dry paste incision on vessels of *Bell* paste. Typically, this design is found on the interior surface of bowls. Walls Engraved *var. Hull* is a late Mississippi period type with a more southerly distribution than that of *Walls*. Phillips (1970:940) considers it to be a possible marker of the Parchman Phase, and speculates that it might be slightly

earlier than *var. Walls* based on an early assemblage from the Walls site that greatly resembles Parchman phase assemblages. At Parchman, examples of *var. Hull* engravings tend to be more carefully executed than those of *var. Walls*, however a small number of examples are more crudely engraved.

### **Punctated Wares**

Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin*

Parkin Punctated *var. Parkin* (Phillips et al. 1951:113; Phillips 1970:150-151) refers to vessels with fingernail punctations either randomly distributed or, more often, aligned in horizontal rows on standard Mississippi jars of Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* paste. Typically, this is an all-over surface treatment, though fingernail punctations also occur as a body treatment on vessels with an incised rim treatment identical to that of Barton Incised. In the established classification, vessels with a Barton Incised rim treatment and fingernail punctations on the body are typed as Barton Incised *var. Togo*. This causes a classificatory problem for datasets composed primarily of body sherds as many punctated sherds will be lacking rim portions, making it impossible to distinguish between Parkin Punctated and Barton Incised *var. Togo*. Phillips therefore suggests only counting sherds as Parkin in cases where the rim treatment is visible (Phillips 1970:150). For better or worse, I have ignored his advice. My reason has to do with the possible temporal and/or spatial significance of ratios of incised to punctated designs, which have been used to make distinctions among phases based on ceramics. Phillips suggests that punctation is a slightly later (though overlapping) decorative technique than incising.

Parkin Punctated *var. unspecified*

I have used this category for sherds that exhibit punctuation on coarse shell tempered paste equivalent to Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry*.

## **Painted Wares**

Avenue Polychrome *var. Avenue*

Avenue Polychrome *var. Avenue* (Phillips et al. 1951:134; Phillips 1970:40-41. Miller 2010) vessels exhibit painted designs combining red- and white-slipped zones with the addition of a black pigment or “stain.” While the red and white slip are similar if not identical to those found on Carson Red on Buff and Nodena Red and White pottery, the black stain is likely a mineral paint containing iron, manganese, or both and applied to unslipped portions of the vessel prior to firing (Miller 2010). This surface decoration occurs most often on bottles made of a fine *Bell* paste and is also associated with exotic forms. Common designs include horizontal bands and spiral motifs, both of which occur in the Parchman sample. *Avenue* is commonly found in the Northern Yazoo Basin as well as the Lower Arkansas River Lowland and the Lower White River Basin during the terminal Mississippi period.

Carson Red on Buff *var. Carson*

Carson Red on Buff (Phillips et al. 1951:132-133; Phillips 1971:62-63) is just as it sounds: red clay slip applied to a light buff-colored ware equivalent to Bell Plain *var.*

*Bell*. The light color of the paste, unusual for *Bell* but common among late Mississippi period painted types, is achieved by firing in an oxidizing environment, which would allow the clay slips to manifest as brightly colored pigments. *Carson* differs from Old Town Red in that portions of the vessel were intentionally left unslipped, thereby allowing the buff color underneath to form part of the design. Phillips (1970:141) also distinguishes the type from Nodena Red and White, suggesting that Carson may occur slightly earlier. Nonetheless, Carson is a late Mississippi period type associated with bottles, bowls and exotic vessels and commonly occurs in the northern Yazoo as well as the St. Francis-Little River Lowlands.

Hollywood White *var. Hollywood*

Hollywood White *var. Hollywood* (Phillips et al. 1951:134; Phillips 1970:90) consists of white clay-slipped designs on *Bell* paste. To my knowledge, this type has been described on the basis of fragmentary body sherds alone. As no whole vessels of Hollywood White have been identified, it is very likely that sherds belonging to the type may actually be part of Nodena Red and White vessels. In any case, its distribution is closely related to that of Nodena. It commonly occurs in the late Mississippi period in the Northern Yazoo Basin, the St. Francis-Little River Lowlands and western Tennessee.

Larto Red *var. Larto*

Larto Red (Phillips et al. 1951:102-105; Phillips 1970:98-99; Williams and Brain 1983:167-169) refers to all-over red slip or paint on a clay-tempered (Baytown Plain) ware. This type occurs throughout the Lower Mississippi Valley, and finer distinctions

among local variations have not yet been made. Examples at Parchman include a number of sherds with a distinctive terra cotta/orange color. Additionally, the slip tends to be rather thick when compared with shell-tempered red painted types. Larto is associated with the Baytown period.

#### Nodena Red and White *var. Nodena*

Nodena Red and White (Phillips et al. 133-134; Phillips 1970:141) vessels exhibit both red and white slip, often in alternating bands, on buff-colored *Bell* paste, where part of the surface remains unslipped so that the buff color forms part of the design. Phillips (1970:90,141) considers Nodena Red and White to be coterminous with Hollywood White, where sherds of the latter might well be misclassified simply because they are too small to exhibit the red slip required by the former. Nodena is not, however, coterminous with Carson Red on Buff, another closely related type. Though both occur primarily during the late Mississippi period in the northern Yazoo, the St. Francis-Little River Lowlands and western Tennessee, Phillips believes Nodena may be slightly later.

#### Old Town Red *var. Old Town*

Old Town Red in general refers to all-over red-slipping on shell tempered wares. The *Old Town* variety specifically refers to this treatment when associated with coarse shell-tempered paste equivalent to Mississippi Plain *var. Neeley's Ferry* (Phillips et al. 1951:129-133; Phillips 1970:144-145). It is most common in the Lower St. Francis Basin and occurs throughout the Mississippi period.



Old Town Red *var. Beaverdam*

The *Beaverdam* variety of Old Town Red is the fine shell-tempered counterpart to *var. Old Town* (Phillips 1970:144-146). That is, it refers to all-over red-slipping on ware equivalent to Bell Plain *var. Bell*. The *Beaverdam* variety has a somewhat more narrow chronological distribution over *Old Town*, occurring most frequently in the late Mississippi period. Conversely, its aerial distribution is somewhat more expansive as it is commonly found in the Northern Yazoo and western Tennessee as well as in the Lower St. Francis Basin.

### **Miscellaneous Decorated Types**

Grace Brushed *var. Grace* (formerly Plaquemine Brushed *var. Grace*)

In general, brushing is not a common decorative technique among northern Yazoo assemblages, being more common to the south in the southern Yazoo Basin and Natchez Bluffs. Grace Brushed *var. Grace* (Phillips 1970:152-153; Williams and Brain 1983: 163-165) consists of designs created by combing or brushing in short horizontal, vertical, or oblique strokes that sometimes overlap. Grace Brushed occurs on course shell-tempered paste equivalent to Mississippi Plain *var. Neely's Ferry*. It is closely related to clay-tempered varieties of Plaquemine Brushed and is found mainly in early Mississippi period assemblages (at least in the south).

Kimmswick Fabric Impressed *var. Kimmswick*

Phillips uses the Kimmswick Fabric Impressed designation to refer to all “fabric-impressed saltpan ware” in the Southeast (Phillips 1970:95), where saltpans are large round or flat-bottomed bowls made from coarse, shell-tempered ware. Saltpans are exceedingly rare in the Lower Mississippi Valley, but do occur with frequency in assemblages from Southeast Missouri and adjacent regions during the Mississippi period. I have classified one sherd from Parchman as Kimmswick Fabric Impressed based on its paste and surface decoration. However, the sherd is too small to identify as a saltpan with any confidence.

Kinlock Simple Stamped *var. unspecified*

Kinlock Simple Stamped (Phillips 1970:97) can be identified by short, linear punctations typically arranged in parallel horizontal lines on coarse shell-tempered pottery. According to Phillips, the combination of stamping and shell-tempering is extremely rare in the Lower Mississippi Valley, justifying the formulation of a type in spite of the very small sample of sherds on which it is based. Two examples of the type are present in the Parchman sample, both quite small. One example has two zones of parallel rows of punctations running perpendicular to one another.

Mulberry Creek Cordmarked *var. unspecified* (formerly Deasonville Cordmarked)

Mulberry Creek Cordmarked is a supertype consisting of cordmarking on clay-tempered wares (Ford and Willey 1939:8; Phillips et al. 1951:82-87; Phillips 1970:136-139). Phillips considers cordmarking to be a non-decorative surface treatment. Mulberry

Creek is ubiquitous during the Baytown period in the Lower Mississippi Valley and adjacent regions. Most examples in the Parchman assemblage could probably be further categorized as *var. Edwards* on the basis of provenience but I have not thought it necessary to do that here. The two rim sherds in the sample both exhibit a folded rim that is very rare in the assemblage.

Pouncey Pinched *var. Pouncey* (formerly Pouncey Ridge Pinched)

As originally described by Phillips, Pouncey Ridge Pinched refers to a decorative technique made by “pinching up” the clay between finger and thumbnail so as to form ridges in simple rectilinear patterns (Phillips et al. 1970:112; Phillips 1970: 154-155). In the Lake George report, Williams and Brain (1983:200) dropped the “ridge” criteria, thereby including any pinched decorative treatment on coarse shell-tempered ware as Pouncey Pinched (though in my opinion, many of the sherds illustrated as *var. Patosi* could easily have been categorized as Parkin Punctated). I have taken the liberty of further expanding the criteria here. Pouncey is a rare type in the Parchman assemblage, but one example exhibits pinching between thumb and forefinger combined with what looks like scraping or gouging with a sharp implement on either side of the pinched “ridge.” In this case, the design is curvilinear rather than rectilinear, and though fragmentary, may represent a swastika motif. I have not come across anything like it illustrated in the literature. The only other example of Pouncey Pinched at Parchman has a design composed of parallel pinched ridges; both examples occur on *Neeley’s Ferry* paste.

Salomon Brushed *var. Salomon*

Salomon Brushed *var. Salomon* (Phillips 1970:158; Williams and Brain 1983:203) refers to an all-over brushing technique applied to clay-tempered (Baytown) pottery, resulting in a rather careless striated surface treatment. Williams and Brain suggest that the treatment is not intended to be decorative but to achieve an overall roughening of the exterior surface of large vessels. Consistently associated with Mulberry Creek Cordmarked, (at least further south in the lower Yazoo and Natchez Bluffs), Salomon Brushed is a Baytown period marker.

Yates Net Impressed *var. unspecified*

Yates Net Impressed is achieved by pressing a fine net into the surface of relatively wet clay (Phillips et al. 1951:146-147; Phillips 1970:176; Brain 1988:391). Associated with clay-tempered paste, it is found in the lower Yazoo Basin during the Baytown period. Phillips (1970: 176) specifies that the net is made of “fine double S-twist knotted cords.” I have hesitantly classified one sherd as Yates Net Impressed, though truthfully, in my example the cord and knot impressions are not visible, which is admittedly problematic. However, the overall design effect is so similar to examples illustrated by Phillips and Brain that I have been willing to believe the requisite fiber impressions have been smoothed or eroded.

## APPENDIX 2: CERAMIC ATTRIBUTES

The type-variety system of classification focuses mainly on variation in paste, temper, and method of decoration to the exclusion of other potentially temporally-sensitive attributes that cross-cut types and varieties. (House 1991, 1993; Mainfort 2003; Phillips 1970; Smith 1969; Williams and Brain 1983). To determine whether the ceramics chronology at Parchman could be further refined on the basis of attribute frequency, I recorded rim and lip attributes related to form, finish, and decorative embellishment, as well as the presence and type of appendages such as lugs and handles. Other decorative embellishments occur on or in the vessel body and include burnishing, addition of nodes, and in one case, a cut-away design on the interior of a bowl that is reminiscent of bas-relief. This appendix included descriptions of attributes identified in the sample. Photographs of attributes described here accompany the results of the analysis presented in Chapter 2.

### **Rim Form**

Although sometimes used interchangeably, I follow Phillips et al. (1951) and others in distinguishing between rim and lip portions in my analysis and the two were recorded separately. By rim form, I refer to the form of the uppermost portion of the vessel (above the neck and shoulder), including the lip and immediately adjacent regions. The following rim forms were identified in the Parchman ceramics assemblage:

### *Simple rim*

Simple rims are defined as having a rim portion equal in thickness to the adjacent wall portions of the vessel. Simple rims occur on all vessel types in the assemblage, including jars, bowls, and bottles as well as on both coarse and fine ware vessels. Simple rims are typically finished by rounding or flattening the lip (see below). Frequently the lip is intermediate between rounded and flattened.

### *Thinned rim*

Thinned rims have rim portions that are thinner than the adjacent portions of the vessel wall. This rim form occurs on jars, bottles, and bowls, primarily of coarse ware, though one fine ware jar has a thinned rim. As with simple rims, associated lip treatment is typically rounded, flattened, or intermediate.

### *Thickened rim*

The rim portion of thickened rim vessels is thicker than the adjacent wall portions of the vessel. This is not a result of adding clay, but rather of leaving the lip portion thick while thinning the rest of the vessel. The rim form is confined to bowls of either coarse or fine ware. Associated lip treatments include rounding and flattening.

### *Folded rim*

Created by folding the top portion of the lip over on itself, this rim form results in a thickened rim that abruptly narrows at the edge of the fold to a much thinner vessel wall. It is relatively rare in the sample, occurring on jars and bowls. After folding, the lip is typically

flattened or rounded (though sometimes intermediate).

#### *Beveled rim*

The beveled form, or “Memphis Rim Mode” is created by cutting away clay from the interior of the rim to form a “distinctly outflaring and interior-beveled lip area on the vertical rim” (House 1993:27). House determined that this is a very late (ca. AD 1450-1550) rim treatment associated with the Kent II and III subphases of the Lower St. Frances Basin in eastern Arkansas. Mainfort (2003:36-37; see also Phillips et al. 1951:116) has found that it is most closely associated with the Memphis subregion and that its frequency decreases substantially with distance from that locale. It is fairly uncommon in this part of the Yazoo Basin and certainly very uncommon at Parchman. It is associated with jars as well as vessels of indeterminate shape.

#### *Tiered rim*

One rim sherd in the sample had a unique rim form made by pinching up the clay of the rim into a sort of peak, and then flattening a portion of it so that the rim appears “tiered.” This treatment appeared on a Mississippi Plain jar of indeterminate size.

#### *Indeterminate rim*

This category includes rim sherds for which the portion of the rim remaining was either too small or too eroded to determine form.

### **Lip treatment/finishing**

Lip treatment refers to the finishing of the vessel opening or orifice. The basic lip

treatments most commonly associated with vessels rims are rounded, flattened, and intermediate. These lip treatments occur on simple, thinned, thickened, and folded rims. Additionally, beveled rims were probably rounded prior to beveling. I also recorded whether the final shaping of the lip resulted in “overhanging” or “slightly overhanging” lip portions, but as there were no significant patterns associated with this trait I do not report that data in Chapter 2. The following lip finishes were recorded in the sample:

#### *Rounded lip*

With this treatment, the vessel lip is finished by rounding off the clay using fingers or another implement, beginning from the interior of the vessel and smoothing towards the exterior. This sometimes results in an overhanging or slightly overhanging strip of clay on the exterior lip of the vessel. This treatment is common and occurs on coarse and fine ware jars, bowls, and bottles with simple, thinned, thickened, folded, and beveled rims.

#### *Flattened lip*

Here, the top of the lip is finished by flattening using a tool or implement to scrape or press the clay flat. Typically, the flattened edge is more or less perpendicular to the interior and exterior rim surfaces. Like rounding, flattening is a very common finishing technique in the sample, occurring on coarse and fine ware jars, bowls, and bottles. Overhanging and slightly overhanging effects are common. Flattening co-occurs with simple, thickened, thinned, folded, and peaked rims.

#### *Intermediate lip*

As with rounded and flattened lips, the top of the lip is smoothed using fingers or another



implement but the result is intermediate between rounded and flattened or looks rounded in some areas and flattened in others. This effect occurs on fine and coarse ware jars, bottles, and bowls. Overhanging and slightly overhanging lips result. Intermediate lip treatments are associated with simple, thinned, and folded rims.

### **Rim/lip Embellishment**

Decorative embellishments on the rim or lip were recorded separately from rim finishes and consist of decorative motifs that were added to the lip after it was finished by rounding, flattening, etc. Generally speaking, they consist of various types of scalloping, incision, notching, and punctuation. The following rim/lip embellishments were identified at Parchman:

#### *Scalloping*

The term scalloping has been used in various ways, including by Phillips et al. (1951:123), who describe this rim as having “an undulating appearance, and the scallop may be squarish or round in contour varying in size and number from a few deep, long ones, to many small ones closely spaced.” Following this distinction, Lansdell (2009:54) has identified scalloping either as 1) a gently undulating rounded rim or 2) “rectangular ‘teeth’ interspersed with deep incisions.” I have referred to Lansdell’s second type of scalloping as “notched” or “crenellated.” I also make a distinction between two types of scalloped rims that follow Phillips et al.’s usage to some degree.

- Gently undulating rounded rim: As used by Lansdell, this refers to a scalloped rim created by varying the height of the vessel rim in an undulating manner. In the Parchman

sample, the scalloping is always rounded and widely spaced. This is a rather common treatment for fine and coarse ware flaring rim and wide shallow bowls.

- Large rounded notches/scallops: This scalloped rim is somewhat similar in appearance to the gently undulating rounded rim, but is achieved by removing large rounded notches from the rims of vessels whose orifices are otherwise horizontal. Fine and coarse ware flaring rim bowls exhibit this rim treatment. In cases where the vessels are complete enough to judge the total number of wide notches removed, the typical number is four. One medium sized coarse ware flaring rim bowl with large rounded notches removed also has vertical incisions on the interior lip (Figure 3. 13).

### *Incision*

Several types of incision were used to decorate vessel rims. Incision is typically achieved by the use of a pointed implement resulting in designs consisting of fine lines of fairly shallow depth. The following incised rim embellishments were identified in the Parchman ceramic assemblage:

- Diagonal incisions on top of lip: This embellishment consists of short lines or ticks on the top of simple flattened and rounded rims. The lines are at a diagonal to the interior and exterior edges of the lip. This decoration is rare but occurs bowls and jars.
- Horizontal or parallel incision: This decoration consists of an unbroken horizontal incised line extending around the entire circumference of the vessel parallel to the lip. It is primarily found on bowl forms and can occur on the top of the lip, the exterior of the vessel just below the lip, or the interior of the vessel just below the lip. One small fine ware simple bowl has horizontal incision on both the interior and exterior rim.

- Vertical or perpendicular incision: Vertical or perpendicular incision refers to a series of short linear incisions or ticks oriented perpendicular to the vessel orifice and spanning the circumference of the vessel. Three types of vertical incision were distinguished based on the placement of the decoration. These include linear incisions or ticks perpendicular to the orifice opening on the top of the lip (bowls), vertical incisions extending from the lip into the interior of the vessel (bowls), and vertical incision on the exterior lip (bowls and jars). This final mode is referred to by Mainfort as “exterior notching,” which he finds to be a late Mississippian period attribute in the region immediately north of the study area (Mainfort 2003:38-39). It is not presently known whether vertical incisions on the interior rim or top of lip are also late.

### *Notching*

The term notching has been used in various ways, including to describe what I would refer to as exterior lip incision (Mainfort 2003:38-39). Rather than use the terms interchangeably, I distinguish notching from incision primarily based on the amount of clay removed from the body of the vessel. Rather than fine lines, as produced by incising with a sharp implement, I consider notches to be broader and deeper than incisions. They are achieved either by gouging clay out of the interior or exterior lip, or by actually cutting or grinding through the vessel rim resulting in a “crenellated” effect. The following forms of notching were identified in the Parchman sample:

- Notched exterior lip: This effect is produced by gouging small linear or rectangular notches out of the exterior vessel lip. It occurs on bowls and vessels of indeterminate shape.

- Notched interior lip: One fine ware flaring rim bowl in the collection has notching on the interior of the lip that results in a “scalloped” effect.
- Notched top of lip: Notching in the top of the lip was achieved by gouging out relatively small notches from the top of the vessel lip. This is an uncommon lip and its association with vessel shape is unknown.
- Notched interior to exterior lip: This treatment refers to a rectangular notch or notches cut out or otherwise completely removed from the rim—the notch extending completely through the vessel wall from interior to exterior. It differs from the notched top of lip in the size of the notches and overall crenelated effect of the vessel rim. Its association with vessel shape is unknown.
- Triangular notches interior to exterior: This lip treatment is nominally similar to above except the notches are triangular rather than rectangular. In some cases the notches are shallow and close together and in others they are substantially larger and more widely spaced. Sometimes, rather than being cut out of the rim prior to firing, the triangular notches appear to have been ground out sometime after the vessel was fired. Variations of this lip treatment occur on bowls and jars.

### *Punctuation*

Punctated rim embellishments on Parchman vessels are made with the use of a small reed, straw, or other instrument, or alternatively consist of thumbnail punctations. The different types of punctated decorations are as follows:

- Circular punctations on top of lip: This embellishment occurs on bowls, and was made using a small round implement such as a hollow reed or straw to impress a neat row

pattern on the top of the lip.

- Thumbnail punctations on exterior lip: One vessel of indeterminate shape exhibits squat thumbnail punctations on the exterior lip of the vessel.
- Thumbnail punctations below exterior lip: One jar of indeterminate size and ware exhibits wide thumbnail punctations 2 cm below the lip on the vessel exterior. As the decoration is not technically at the lip, this could possibly be considered a decorative body treatment rather than a rim treatment.

### **Other Decorative Attributes**

The following decorative attributes are associated with vessel bodies rather than rim and/or lip:

#### *Interior body decorations*

One medium sized fine ware flaring rim bowl has an unusual interior decoration, consisting of a stepped geometric design that was made by cutting away clay to leave a raised design behind in the manner of bas-relief (Figure 3.14). I can find nothing like it in the LMV literature. Other interior decorations on bowls form part of type and variety definitions (e.g. Walls Engraved *var. Hull*) and are not discussed here)

#### *Burnishing*

Burnishing is an all-over body treatment achieved by polishing or rubbing the clay surface of a vessel with a hard object such as a smooth stone prior to firing. It results in a fine polish on the surface of the fired vessel. Burnishing is not a very common surface treatment in

the sample, but is primarily associated with fine ware jars, bowls, and bottles of Bell Plain *var. Bell* paste. One small Winterville Incised jar also exhibits burnishing.

### *Nodes*

Nodes are small lumps of clay appended primarily to jars. Placement is either on the shoulder of the vessel or as a handle decoration. Smith (1969:4) tells us that at Chucalissa, nodes are an early form of handle decoration, later replaced by incising, punctation, and other embellishments. At Parchman, nodes appear once on the strap handle of a small Parkin Punctated *var. unspecified* jar and once on the loop handle of a very small Unidentified Incised jar.

## **Handles**

Handles of various types (primarily lug and loopform) occur fairly rarely in the assemblage, but are most often associated with jars. A small number of bowls also had handles. The following handle forms were identified in the sample:

### *Lug handle*

Lugs are small clay appendages applied to exterior vessel walls either adjacent to the lip or sometimes slightly below. The edges of the lugs are smoothed into the vessel wall so that distinguishing between the vessel wall and the appendage is often difficult. Lugs are typically oval in plan view but elongated oval and triangular shapes also occur. Typically, the upper surface of the lug extends out from the vessel on a more or less horizontal plane, but both oval and elongated oval lugs also occur in downturning forms, where the upper lug surface slopes at

an angle away from the vessel. Most lugs in the sample are quite thin in profile, but one example is considerably thicker. This fat lug may be akin to the “Hushpuckena” lug identified by Belmont (1961) as an earlier variant of the thinner and later Oliver phase lug (Phillips 1970:941; Lansdell 2009:57). Unfortunately, the vessels in this assemblage are too fragmentary to say with any confidence how many lugs typically belong to any one vessel. My largely unsubstantiated impression is that when lugs do occur, two per vessel is the norm. Lugs occur on both fine and coarse ware jars of all but the largest size. They occasionally occur on small and very small fine and coarse ware simple bowls.

#### *Loop handle*

Loop handles are handle appendages that are oval or circular in cross-section and attached vertically at or sometimes slightly above or below the vessel rim (Phillips et al. 1951:150). They are typically short and squat, as opposed to strap handles, which are more elongated. Chronologically, they are considered earlier than strap handles (Phillips et al. 1951:152; Smith 1969:5-6). Loop handles are rare in the Parchman sample, occurring just twice. Both examples are associated with jars. One of these has two nodes at its base; it is attached to a very small jar of indeterminate ware.

#### *Intermediate loop/strap handle*

One handle in the sample appears to be intermediate between that of a loop and a strap handle. That is it is longer and less fat than a true loop but still more oval in shape than a strap handle. Smith (1969:6) refers to this form as a “wide loop” or intermediate handle and places them chronologically between loop and strap forms. The intermediate handle in the Parchman sample is attached to a small jar of indeterminate ware.

### *Strap handle*

Strap handles are flatter in profile than loop handles and are longer than they are wide. All strap handles in the Parchman sample are parallel-sided, though triangular or converging straps are described by Phillips et al. (1951:150) and others. They occur on coarse ware jars and vessels for which shape could not be determined. One strap handle associated with a small coarse ware jar was attached at the shoulder of the vessel by two “legs” and has one node visible on the upper portion, though there were probably originally two. No other embellishments were noted on strap handles.

### *Tube handle*

Also referred to as ribbon, wide, or broad strap handles, tube handles are typically as wide or wider than they are tall (Phillips et al. 1951:151). Tube handles occur on one medium sized coarse ware jar, and on vessels of indeterminate shape. One of the latter was embellished with vertical incisions at the base of the handle. According to Smith (1969:8) the tube or broad strap handle occurs late in the loopform series at Chucalissa.

### *Zoomorphic handle*

One complete zoomorphic handle was found during excavations at Parchman. The handle was formed into the shape of a four-legged animal with a long tail, perhaps a feline or lizard form. Unfortunately, very little of the vessel to which it was attached was recovered. However, it appears to have been a coarse ware jar of indeterminate size. Other examples of animal forms modeled from clay exist in the sample that are not complete enough to determine whether they were handles, rim riders, or other figurines.



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