

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION'S INVESTIGATIONS AT MOUNDVILLE IN 1869 AND 1882

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ABSTRACT

Recent work has uncovered records pertaining to two early investigations at the Moundville site in Alabama. These records provide a good description of the earthworks as they appeared in the late nineteenth century, before erosion had fully taken its toll. They also contain information on excavations conducted in two of the mounds, and provide contextual information for a number of interesting artifacts now in the Smithsonian Institution's collections.

Introduction

Moundville, located on the Black Warrior River in west-central Alabama, is one of the largest civic-ceremonial centers built by North America's native inhabitants. The site was occupied for some seven centuries (ca. A.D. 900–1600), during which time it grew to a maximum extent of about 100 ha. Currently, the site's most obvious features are twenty artificial mounds, which are arranged around a large rectangular plaza (Peebles 1979; Steponaitis 1983).

Undoubtedly because of these spectacular earthworks, Moundville has long been the subject of archaeological interest. The first well-publicized work there was carried out by C. B. Moore, who visited the site once in 1905 and again in 1906. With his crew of hired workmen, Moore riddled the mounds and adjacent areas with "trial holes," finding numerous burials and associated artifacts. Accounts of these discoveries soon found their way into print, attracting considerable attention (Moore 1905, 1907). Moore's reports also contained the earliest published map of this site (Fig. 1), which, when compared to more recent maps, has proven to be quite accurate.

Yet even though his work was the earliest to become widely known, Moore was by no means the first person to take a scholarly interest in Moundville. References to the site, variously called "the Carthage group" or "the Prince mounds," cropped up in the literature throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. The earliest of these

appeared in 1851, when Pickett briefly noted that “near Carthage . . . there are many mounds of various sizes, some of which are large” (1900:168). Somewhat later, in 1872, Brewer recounted that a mound at the site had been “dug into” by a Professor N. T. Lupton; this excavation was said to have produced “skeletons,” “a few stone implements,” and “charred wood,” but little else was mentioned in the way of detail (Brewer 1872:271). Shortly after this account, artifacts from Moundville began to be described and illustrated in various publications, notably those of Rau (1876: Figs. 49, 150, 151), Holmes (1883: Pls. 57[1,4], 66[6]; 1903: Pl. 58f.), Wilson (1890: Figs. 13, 31[150–151]), and Thruston (1890: Fig. 84). The site was also listed in the Bureau of American Ethnology’s *Catalogue of Prehistoric Earthworks East of the Rocky Mountains* (Thomas 1891:13). Evidently, Moundville was subjected to a certain amount of archaeological exploration in the late 1800s, but until recently the exact nature of these investigations remained obscure.

My purpose here is to describe more fully some of these early episodes of fieldwork at Moundville, and to present the data that these episodes yielded. The principal sources of information are two manuscripts recently located in the archives of the Smithsonian Institution. The first consists of a letter from Nathaniel T. Lupton to Joseph Henry, written in 1869, which recounts in detail Lupton’s investigations at the site (Lupton 1869). The second is a manuscript by James D. Middleton (one of Cyrus Thomas’s field agents in the Bureau of Mound Exploration) which describes Moundville as it appeared during a first-hand visit in 1882 (Middleton 1882). Taken together, these documents shed considerable light on the history of the site, describe the contents and early condition of some of the earthworks, and clarify the provenience of certain interesting objects now in the Smithsonian Institution’s collections.

The manuscripts are presented and discussed first, following by a description of the artifacts that Lupton and Middleton recovered.

Lupton’s Investigation in 1869

In the years immediately following the War between the States, N. T. Lupton was a professor of chemistry at Southern University in Greensboro, Alabama. At the request of Joseph Henry, then secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Professor Lupton undertook the task of “exploring the Indian mounds on the Warrior River.” He began his fieldwork in the middle of September 1869, and quite naturally found himself drawn to Moundville:

Near Carthage, a small village, formerly in the southern part of Tuscaloosa, but now in the extreme northern section of Hale County, is a collection of mounds more than twenty in number, which have attracted much attention since the early settlement of the state. . . . This interesting group of mounds was selected for examination. They are situated on a level plane about 23 miles north of Greensboro and 18 south of Tuscaloosa within sight of the road connecting these two places, and immediately upon the bank of the river above high water. They are truncated, rectangular pyramids averaging about 20 feet in height. As the field has been cultivated for many years some have been ploughed down nearly to the common level, while one [Mound B] towers up over 40 feet above the plane and is covered with a luxuriant growth, one tree measuring near three feet in diameter.

There is considerable regularity in the arrangement of these mounds, the one [Mound A] occupying somewhat of a central position being the largest in extent and the more prominent of the others forming a rectangle around it. This central one [Mound A] is at its base one hundred and ten yards by seventy and about twenty feet high. The longer sides run N. 12° E. Towards the East, South and West are twelve [additional mounds] which approximate closely to the sides of a rectangle, the nearest one on each side being distant just 275 yards. Towards the north or exactly N. 12° W. is the high mound [Mound B]; distant 120 yards, while towards the east and southeast are two others at about the same distance as the high one. Toward the Southeast and Southwest are two at the distance of 350 yards, and toward the northwest are several at the distance of half a mile or more.

The following diagram will more fully explain the relative situation of these mounds [Fig. 2].

Beyond the mounds towards the south are the remains of an irregular earthwork with occasional elevations along its course as of small mounds or towers.

The map Lupton drew to accompany this account depicts 17 of the site's 20 artificial mounds in their correct relative positions. Only three mounds do not appear. One of these is Mound T, located inside the plaza, but so small and plowed down that it was hardly noticeable even in Moore's time (see Fig. 1). Also missing are Mounds C and D, and two northernmost earthworks at the site. Both of these mounds are quite large, so size cannot explain their absence on the map. Instead, it may be that these mounds were surrounded by woods which obscured them from Lupton's view, just as they are obscured today.

It is noteworthy that almost all of the distances Lupton measured outward from the "central mound" (Mound A) are correct to within less than 5%. The only inaccurate measurement was the one between the "central mound" (Mound A) and the "high mound" (Mound B), which appears on the map and in the text as "120 yards," but is actually closer to 180 yards.

Yet perhaps the most intriguing thing about Lupton's drawing is the presence of certain features which do not appear on subsequent maps and are not visible today. Prime among these are the "remains of an

irregular breastwork," which formed an arc around the southern end of the plaza—probably the remains of a palisade line that by the 1930s could be seen only as a soil discoloration on aerial photographs (Peebles 1979: Fig. I-1; R. Lafferty, personal communication). Also on the map are several mounds which do not correspond to any definite earthworks still extant. One such mound lies just off the southeastern corner of the plaza, another just off the southwestern corner, and two more off the northwestern corner. The one to the southwest does correspond to a low rise noted by Moore (1907:343) and visible on recent maps (marked M-2 in Peebles 1979: Fig. I-1), but whether this rise is natural or artificial has never been established. The identity of the other superfluous mounds remains unclear.

Lupton's activities at Moundville were by no means confined to mapping, but involved some digging as well. His map unequivocally points to Mound O as being the earthwork he "opened." An account of the work in Lupton's own words follows:

[This mound] is about 80 ft. by 60 at the base and about 50 by 30 ft. at the top and about 16 feet in height. These measurements are as accurate as the nature of the sides which have been exposed for ages to atmospheric agencies would admit. The plan adopted in examining this mound, as involving the least labor and, at the same time, presenting the best prospect for a favorable result, was to sink a shaft or well eight feet in diameter as nearly over the center as possible and at the same time to cut a trench four feet wide from this to one of the nearest sides. After the trench had been carried down four feet it was abandoned and the central shaft continued with the following result: At a depth of three feet portions of two skeletons were found with their heads toward the east. The teeth were in good state of preservation, while the remaining bones nearly all crumbled on being handled. At the depth of about eight feet the remains of three or more skeletons were found similar to the first. The bottom portion of a vase was here found which, on being removed, disclosed a circular opening about one foot in diameter, around the sides of which were the charred remains of wood showing that a stake or wooden pillar once occupied this hole. About one foot from the bottom of this opening, at the depth of 16 feet from the surface, the remains of several skeletons were discovered with teeth and some other bones in a fine state of preservation. A large quantity of ashes and charcoal and one piece of charred bone were found around the opening. Only a few implements were found; what appeared to be beads crumbled to powder when handled. Muscle shells were occasionally found while digging, also charcoal, pieces of mica and pottery.

The fact was clearly established that this mound is a *burial* mound, and the inference is natural that a stake was originally planted over the grave of several personages of distinction and victims burned thereat. At a depth of seventeen feet the original earth was reached.

Lupton's narrative clearly indicates that clusters of burials were encountered at three different depths within the mound (Fig. 3). The first cluster, consisting of two skeletons, was found at a depth of about

7 ft below the surface (that is, 3 ft below the point at which the "trench" was abandoned). The second cluster, containing at least three more skeletons was found approximately 12 ft below the surface (or 8 ft below the "trench"). And the third cluster, with its "several" skeletons, occurred at a depth of about 16 ft, only 1 ft above the base of the mound. In view of the 4- to 5-ft vertical separation between clusters, it seems quite possible, indeed likely, that each cluster was associated with a distinct phase of mound construction; if so, then the evidence would suggest that Mound O was built in at least three stages.

It is also important to consider the nature of the "circular opening" observed by Lupton within the mound. Abundant charcoal and burned bone were found both within and around this feature. Moreover, the opening was covered by the "bottom portion of a vase"—probably the large Mississippi Plain, *var. Warrior* sherd now in the National Museum's collections (cat. no. 9345), originally the base of a jar. Although Lupton's interpretation of the feature as a pot hole is plausible, it may well be that the feature was actually a fire basin. Certainly, a large fragment of a cooking vessel would be more likely to occur within a hearth than above a post hole. No matter which interpretation we accept, such a feature at a depth of 12 ft almost certainly would have been associated with the surface of an early stage of mound construction, originally about 5 ft above the plaza (Fig. 3). Unfortunately for us, a bit of vagueness in Lupton's narrative makes it impossible to determine whether the burials in the second cluster were found above, below, or directly on top of this surface.

Evidence of Lupton's digging could still be seen when Moore visited the site in 1905. In fact, Moore's brief description of Mound O provides additional information on where Lupton's trench was placed (also see Fig. 1):

Mound O . . . had been trenched from the eastern side to beyond the center of the summit plateau. This trench 8 feet wide at the top, expanded at the end to a circular hole about 13 feet in diameter. Both trench and hole were comparatively shallow, the depth being perhaps from 3 to 4 feet [Moore 1905:199-200].

By the time Moore observed this mound, 36 years of erosion had filled in most of Lupton's shaft and also had enlarged the horizontal dimensions of both the shaft and the trench.

In addition to describing his own work, Lupton noted that some earlier digging had also been done at Moundville:

One of these mounds was opened some twenty years since and a skeleton, which crumbled on exposure, was found near the center, together with some beads and a few remains.

Judging from his map (Fig. 2), Lupton was here referring to Mound G, which even as late as 1905 still bore evidence of this early excavation (Moore 1905:129, 194). That a burial was said to have been discovered in this earthwork is intriguing, because Moore's 25 trial holes in Mound G "gave no indication of pit, of burial, or of artifact" (Moore 1905:194). Of course, it must also be borne in mind that Lupton's report of this find was based on hearsay, and so its reliability is uncertain.

Lupton's account of previous finds at Moundville also included the following tidbits of information:

Two round stone tablets or plates eight and ten inches in diameter and a rectangular one six inches by nine, notched and grooved, were secured in the neighborhood and are said to have been found in one of the mounds, also a very perfect spear head and some imperfect stone implements.

These artifacts—including three stone palettes (Fig. 13a–c) and a chert "dagger" (Fig. 15)—were obtained by Lupton and sent to the Smithsonian Institution. Although Lupton reported little about the source of these artifacts, some additional information on this matter can be gleaned from remarks made by Thomas Maxwell to the Alabama Historical Society in 1876:

Mr. Hezekiah K. Powell, says that in December, 1866, he was in Carthage on sheriff's duty, and found just south of the large mound, on the plantation of Mrs. Prince, the skeleton of a man that measured 9 feet from head to heel as he lay in the ground—several physicians being present who arranged and examined the bones. Around the skeleton's neck, were three strands of beads, made of shells. Not the muscle or other shells of our rivers, but sea-shells, which were perforated so as to be strung together, and were re-strung, a yard in length, after finding them, by the little son of Mr. Theoron Brown. Two circular stones, 8 inches in diameter, were found beneath the head of the skeleton, and on the top of these, as a pillow for his head, another stone about 20 inches long and 10 inches wide. These circular stones were ornamented with notches cut around the circle, and a mark within it, done with great precision; the flat rock the same. The kind of stone was such as is found along North river, but of which there is none in the vicinity of Carthage. Along side the giant were other skeletons not more than five feet in length, but the one having the stone beneath his head was a giant, and his thigh bones were equal to those of a horse. . . .

I copied the above from the lips of Mr. Powell, and last week went down to Carthage, in the hope that I might get this giant skeleton to produce on this occasion, but found that I was too late; that another antiquarian gentlemen had obtained the skeleton, (Mr. Force), and had taken it to the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, some 3 or 4 years since [Maxwell 1876:70–71].

In view of the explicit reference to the Smithsonian and the relatively close correspondence of the dates, it seems more than likely that the three stone palettes collected by Lupton in 1869 were those that had

been discovered by Powell in 1866. Admittedly, certain aspects of Maxell's account conflict with this reconstruction: the mention of a "Mr. Force" instead of Lupton; the recollection that the material had been sent to Washington "3 or 4 years since," rather than seven years previously; and the assertion that the rectangular palette was 10 by 20 in. in size, rather than 6 by 9 in. Such discrepancies, however, seem minor in relation to the coincidences, especially given that Maxwell's account was delivered second hand, many years after the events described took place.

Although Lupton managed to obtain the palettes and a number of other artifacts, he did not succeed in getting all the museum pieces he desired. One of his letters to the Smithsonian contains the following passage:

A piece of sculpture, known as the Indian Idol, photographs of which are enclosed, was placed in my hands by Capt. Jack, a gentleman living about seven miles distant from the mounds. This gentleman has not yet consented to my sending this interesting object to Washington, but it is hoped he will be incuded to do so.

Sadly, Capt. Jack remained intransigent and the idol was never sent to the Smithsonian; nor did the photograph made by Lupton survive. We do know, however, that this artifact was actually a pipe, for Lupton referred to it as such in one of his later letters (Lupton 1870).

All in all, Lupton's recorded observations provide us with an interesting glimpse of the Moundville site as it appeared before the ravages of erosion had taken so great a toll. They also contain some useful information on the contents of two of the mounds. Although the notes he kept were not so precise as one would nowadays hope, the level of detail in his recording was certainly comparable to, if not better than, the prevailing standards of his time. Indeed, if we were to evaluate his work in terms of a cost-benefit ratio, it would probably fare better than many of today's projects with five- and six-figure budgets: his four days of excavation with a crew of five cost the U.S. Government only \$29.85!

Middleton's Investigation in 1882

Some time during 1882, James D. Middleton visited the Moundville site as part of the Bureau of American Ethnology's program of mound exploration. This program, directed by Cyrus Thomas, succeeded in collecting vast amounts of data on archaeological sites in the eastern United States, much of which was published in a single massive report (Thomas 1894). For reasons unknown, however, this report made no

mention of the work done at Moundville. Indeed, the exclusion of the site from the published report seems even more inexplicable when we realize that both Middleton and Thomas were well aware of the site's archaeological importance: a letter from Middleton to Thomas dated 1886 made explicit reference to the "well-known" site at Carthage (Middleton 1886).

The only existing record of Middleton's work at Moundville is a manuscript entitled "Mounds on the Prince Plantation" (Middleton 1882). This report contains, for each of the mounds, a brief narrative description accompanied by rough marginal sketches depicting the earthwork in horizontal plan and vertical section (Fig. 4). Also included is a site map (Fig. 5), which is not nearly so good as the one drawn by Lupton. Although the mounds along the western and southern sides of the plaza are positioned reasonably well, those along the northern and eastern sides are not. Indeed, the latter part of the map is so distorted that it is hard to imagine how anyone sober could have drawn it while looking at the site firsthand. Giving Middleton the benefit of the doubt, the most likely explanation is that the map was drawn after the actual visit, the distortions probably resulting from incomplete notes, faulty memory, or both. Fortunately, the relative sequence of the mounds around the plaza seems to be correct even if their relative locations are not. Thus, it is still possible in most cases to identify which mound is which, especially when the descriptions are taken into account.

Middleton's narrative follows, to which I have added the lettered mound designations currently in use (Fig. 1; also see Peebles 1979: Fig. I-1).

These mounds are on the Prince Plantation in the North-Western part of Hale County, Alabama, forming a circular (nearly) group. [They] are on a high, sandy bottom, about three hundred yards East of the Black Warrior river. The tops of some are large enough to cultivate, and some of them have been plowed down until they are much smaller than formerly.

Number 1 [Mound T]. Small, oval, sandy mound, longest East and West. Thirty feet long, twenty feet wide and about four feet high. Has been plowed down. Broken pottery and shells found around its base.

Number 2 [Mound I]. Oval, sandy, longest East-West. About sixty feet long, forty feet wide and seven feet high. Pine trees are growing around the edge, some of them are about three feet in circumference. Broken pottery and shells are scattered around the base of it.

Number 3 [Mound J]. Oval, sandy mound. Longest East and West. Seventy-five feet long, forty feet wide and about nine feet high. West of Number 2. Pine trees growing on the sides and top, the largest about two and a half feet in diameter. Broken shells and pottery near its base.

Number 4 [Mound K]. West of no. 3 is an oval sandy mound, longest East and West, forty feet long, thirty-five feet wide, and about nine feet high. West of it is a small pond (a), and a trench (b) has been dug in it by someone. At the point *c*, the pieces of a stone disk were found. Pine trees are growing on top and on the sides.

Number 5 [Mound L]. Nearly square, has been cultivated, about one hundred feet square on top and ten feet high. The North Eastern corner is the lowest. Sandy soil. Broken pottery, and shells around its base. Small hard wood saplings growing on its sides.

Number 6 [Mound M]. Nearly square, has been plowed, sandy. Thirty feet long and twenty feet wide, and about 5 feet high. Broken pieces of pottery and fresh water shells are found around its base.

Number 7 [Mound M-2] is an oval, sandy mound forty feet long, thirty wide, and about four feet high, is considerably lower than it was by being plowed so many times, some thick pieces of pottery were found near its base.

Number 8 [Mound N] is nearly square, sixty feet wide and seventy feet long, about twelve feet high, sandy soil. Pine trees and small hard wood saplings are growing on it. Broken pottery was seen east of it, near the base.

Number 9 [Mound O] is a small nearly square mound. Sandy soil. Has been opened. About nine feet high. Forty feet square. The top and sides is [*sic*] covered with small hard wood trees and has been dug into at the point *a*.

It should be noted that Middleton depicted the location of Lupton's trench correctly in his marginal drawing of Mound O (Fig. 4), but incorrectly on the map (Fig. 5).

Number 10 [Mound P]. Nearly square, about one hundred feet by ninety and fifteen feet high, sandy soil. Hard wood trees grow on the sides and top of it. Pieces of pottery and shells are scattered on the eastern side of it in the field.

Number 11 [Mound Q] is also nearly square, about fifty feet long, thirty-five feet wide and eight feet high. Small trees growing on it. Sandy soil. Pieces of pottery and shell are found around its base.

Number 12 [Mound R] is a large nearly square mound, about one-hundred and seventy-five by one-hundred and fifty feet, about twelve feet high. Flat top, sandy soil. Hard wood trees growing on it, small. Broken pottery is seen in the field around it base.

Number 13 [Mound A]. Large, nearly square, about one quarter acre area on top, and is about eighteen feet high. Flat top, has been cultivated, small hard wood trees are growing on its sides. Pieces of pottery and shells were found near its base.

Number 14 [Mound B] is the largest of the group. About one-hundred feet square on top, about fifty feet high. Flat top, has a graded way (a) leading to the top from the field on the Eastern side. The Eastern side lowest, the South-Eastern corner highest. Large Oak, Beech, and Mock Orange trees are growing on top and the sides. Some of these are about seven feet in circumference. A deep ravine north and west of it. Pieces of pottery and shells are found around its base.

Significantly, Middleton's drawing of Mound B shows a distinct step in the profile—suggesting that the summit was originally terraced (Fig. 4). This would explain why, even now, the southwestern corner of the mound is considerably higher than the rest (see Peebles 1979: Fig. I-1). Middleton's reference to the "South-Eastern corner" as being the highest is obviously a slip of the pen, for it conflicts not only with his drawing but also with his immediately prior assertion that the "Eastern side" was the lowest.

Another interesting aspect of Middleton's sketch of this mound is the "shaft dug by someone" in the summit. This hole could well have been the one made by Thomas Maxwell, a local planter who burrowed into Mound B in 1840 and reported finding "broken pottery, arrow-heads of flint, hatches of flint, and burned clay mixed with pebbles and charcoal" (Maxwell 1876:69).

Middleton's narrative continues:

Number 15 [Mound E] is another large square, flat topped, sandy mound, about one-hundred and twenty-five feet square, and twelve feet high. Has been cultivated, is nearly surrounded by a slough (a). Has been cultivated, small hard wood trees grow on the sides and an oak about four feet in circumference is growing at its Eastern base. A few pieces of pottery are seen on the top, and near the Eastern base of it.

Number 16 [Mound F] is a small oval, sandy mound, lowest in the middle, fifty feet long, thirty feet wide, and about eight feet high. Small pine trees are growing on it. Pieces of pottery are around its base.

Number 17 [Mound G] is nearly square, about fifty by thirty feet on top, and nine feet high. Eastern side the highest, sandy soil, is covered with small pine trees.

Number 18 is small, has been nearly plowed away, the hollow was made by plowing, what is left is covered with small pine trees.

Number 19 is a small round, sandy mound, ten feet in diameter and about a foot high. Nearly plowed away. East of main group.

Identification of the last two mounds is a bit difficult. One possible interpretation equates Number 19 with Mound H, and Number 18 with a severely displaced Mound S. However, it is also possible that Number 18 corresponds to Mound H, and Number 19 represents a feature which has not been recorded (or identified as an earthwork) since. Complicating these interpretations is the fact that neither of the two features, as described by Middleton, closely resembles Mound H.

Middleton's final mound description also poses an interpretive dilemma:

Number 20 is a round, sandy cone-shaped mound about thirty feet in diameter. Four feet high. Has been plowed, on top was found the clay. West of main group.

Could it be that Number 20 represents the ridge north of Mound R, which Moore labeled "U" on his map (Fig. 1)? Or does it correspond to one of the unidentified features northwest of the plaza that were mapped by Lupton? There is simply no way to be sure.

All told, the results of Middleton's sojourn at Moundville are rather disappointing. The map he made was largely inaccurate, and his mound descriptions approximate at best. The principal value of the manuscript lies in the impression it gives of the condition of the site at this time, and in the information it provides on the provenience of some of the artifacts that Middleton collected.

The Artifacts

The collections made by both Lupton and Middleton are still housed at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), Smithsonian Institution. Obviously, the range of artifacts that these early investigators sent back does not represent everything that modern archaeologists would consider to be of interest. Their collecting practices tended to emphasize large or complete artifacts at the expense of smaller, more fragmentary ones. Thus, many kinds of domestic refuse were either totally ignored or severely underrepresented. This bias notwithstanding, the collections are worthy of description, not only for the sake of thoroughness, but also because they contain certain artifact categories that have not been well described elsewhere.

Pottery (USNM 9342–9345, 82354, 82362–82363, 82366–82367, 82369). It appears that neither Lupton nor Middleton cared much for broken pottery. The former's collection contains only 26 sherds and the latter's 86, making a total of 112 pieces (Table 1; Figs. 6–9). Within this sample are types and varieties diagnostic of four different phases: Moundville I (ca. A.D. 1050–1250), Moundville II (ca. A.D. 1250–1400), Moundville III (ca. A.D. 1400–1550), and Alabama River (ca. A.D. 1550–1700) (Steponaitis 1983). The only substantial component *not* represented in these nineteenth-century collections is the Late Woodland West Jefferson phase (ca. A.D. 900–1050), during which time a roughly 1-ha area in the western portion of the site was occupied (Steponaitis 1981, 1983; Walthall and Wimberly 1978:122–123). Although the lack of West Jefferson sherds is noteworthy, it is not too surprising, since the pottery from this phase is almost always undecorated, and therefore not prone to catch a nineteenth-century antiquarian's eye.

Of special interest are two sherds of Moundville Engraved, *var. Hemphill* that come from a single bottle. The design on these sherds

consists of a distinctive hand motif, in which the voles are indicated by diagonal lines and the rest of the hand is filled with hatching (Fig. 7b–c). This particular treatment of the hand is unusual at Moundville. The only other occurrences are on two bottles excavated by Moore (1907: Figs. 45, 46), and in each case the execution of the hand is so similar that all these vessels were probably engraved by the same individual.

Ceramic Pipe (USNM 82346). Among the artifacts recovered by Middleton is an elbow pipe made of shell-tempered clay (Fig. 13a). The pipe is obviously hand-modeled, and has a somewhat flattened bottom.

Small Ceramic Discs (USNM 82334). The collection contains 16 small discs (Fig. 10m–p), ranging from 3 to 5.4 cm in diameter and from .7 to 1.2 cm in thickness. All are made from shell-tempered sherds.

Small Stone Discs (USNM 9334, 82345). Of the six in the collection, five are made of sandstone (Fig. 10i–j,l) and one of greenstone (Fig. 10k). One sandstone specimen has a central depression on each side (Fig. 10l). Diameters range from 2.3 to 5 cm, and thicknesses from .7 to 2.1 cm.

Thin Slate Disc (USNM 82351). This object of grey slate seems to be a fragment of a disc that was originally 9 cm in diameter and .5 cm thick (Fig. 10f). Its function is unknown.

Slate Gorget (USNM 82700). This piece of red slate appears to be the upper portion of teardrop-shaped gorget (Fig. 10g). It is 7.5 cm wide and .3 cm thick. The fragment exhibits six drilled perforations, but no other evidence of decoration. Since finished gorgets of this type are invariably engraved, this probably represents an unfinished specimen that broke during manufacture. The presence of this fragment suggests that such gorgets may have been produced on the site itself. Completed gorgets of similar shape and material are known not only from Moundville, but also from Seven Mile Island (1Lu21) in the Pickwick Basin (Webb and DeJarnette 1942: Pl. 58–2) and Wildcat Bend (22Lo558) on the central Tombigbee River (Rucker 1974:85–86, Pl. 4c).

Greenstone Celts (USNM 82351). There are five small celts in the collection, all made of meta-felsite—a metamorphosed (highly silicified) igneous rock (Fig. 10b–d). The three complete specimens exhibit the following measurements:

Maximum Length (cm)	Maximum Width (cm)	Maximum Thickness (cm)
6.6	4.7	1.2
5.8	3.2	1.7
6.4	2.1	0.9

All show evidence of use-wear on the bit.

Cylindrical Greenstone Fragment (USNM 82351). This is a piece of polished meta-felsite about 5 cm long (Fig. 10a). Its cross-section is in the shape of a slightly flattened circle, 2.7 cm in diameter. The fragment probably comes from the poll of a spatulate celt, sometimes called a "long-handled spud." At least one such complete artifact has been found with a burial at Moundville (Peebles 1979: Fig. III-14), and similar forms are known from Mississippian sites in northern Alabama (Webb and Wilder 1951: Pl. 69 [C6]), Tennessee (Jones 1876: Fig. 54; Thruston 1890:295), southern Illinois and Indiana (Cole et al. 1951: Fig. 41-5; Black 1967: Fig. 493), eastern Missouri (Titterington 1938: Fig. 23d; Walker and Adams 1946: Pl. VIIIb [upper left]), and eastern Oklahoma (Hamilton 1952: Pl. 50).

Stone Palettes (USNM 9331, 9332, 9333, 82352, 82353). Three whole palettes were collected by Lupton, and two fragmentary ones by Middleton. All five are made of a grey or greenish-grey micaceous siltstone. Each is described individually below.

One complete palette (Fig. 11a) is circular, has a scalloped edge, and is decorated on one face with a single line engraved just inside the circumference. It is 24.7 cm in diameter, and 1.2 cm thick. This piece has been illustrated previously (Rau 1876: Fig. 150; Holmes 1883: Pl. 57 [1]; Wilson 1890: Fig. 31 [150]).

The second whole palette is also circular and exhibits a notched edge (Fig. 11b). Three concentric lines are engraved near the edge on one face. The diameter is 20.7 cm and the thickness 1.7 cm. An early illustration appears in Holmes (1883: Pl. 57 [4]).

The third complete specimen is rectangular, 23 cm long, 15 cm wide, and 2.1 cm thick (Fig. 11c). The two shorter ends are notched, and three lines are engraved on one face near the edge. Early illustrations were published by Rau (1876: Fig. 151) and Wilson (1890: Fig. 31 [151]).

Considerably less elaborate is a fragmentary circular palette collected by Middleton on Mound K (Fig. 12e; for location of this find, see Fig. 4). It exhibits neither notching nor engraving, but does have a residue of hematite pigment on both sides. The specimen is thicker than most (2.7 cm) and originally had a diameter of about 23 cm.

Interestingly, what remains of the object consists of pieces shaped like pie slices. Many of the palettes found at Moundville are broken in precisely this manner (e.g., Moore 1907: Fig. 89; Peebles 1979: Fig. VII-4), suggesting that the breakage is deliberate—part of a ritual pattern.

The one other fragmentary specimen exhibits a terraced edge—unusual at Moundville—and two engraved lines on one side (Fig. 10e). The piece is 1.2 cm thick.

Sandstone Drill (USNM 82355). This refers to a piece of sandstone which has a deliberately-made, dowel-shaped protrusion (Fig. 10h). The protrusion is 1.1 cm wide, 1.3 cm long, and has a conical tip. The artifact may have been a drill or reamer of some sort, but this functional interpretation is by no means certain.

Small Abraders (USNM 9335, 82349). Two of these artifacts exist in the collection. Both appear to be intentionally shaped, and are made from sandstone. One is rectangular in outline, and slightly biconcave in section (Fig. 12c). The other is a fragment which exhibits several elongated grooves, each about 2 cm wide and .7 cm deep (Fig. 12b).

Utilized Sandstone Slabs (USNM 82337, 82359). This category includes 13 angular pieces of sandstone, all of which show signs of use but little or no deliberate shaping. It is clear that these slabs had multifarious uses: twelve of them exhibit one or two small pits, usually 2–3 cm in diameter and .5–.8 cm deep (Fig. 12d); three have shallow basin-shaped depressions; and one has long shallow grooves (Fig. 12a). Most of the pieces are of moderate overall size, the largest horizontal dimension never exceeding 14 cm, and the thickness never greater than 6 cm.

Chert “Dagger” (USNM 9330). Perhaps the most spectacular object collected by Lupton, this is an example of the so-called “ceremonial flints” which turn up infrequently at Mississippian sites over much of the Southeast (Fig. 14). The piece is 18.5 cm long, and has a maximum width of 5.8 cm. It was flaked from a material that closely resembles (and may in fact be) Fort Payne chert. Although its precise form is unique, it does have a vague similarity to certain shapes known from Tennessee (Thruston 1890: Figs. 14, 142, 143, 145; Brehm 1981: Fig. 7).

Miscellaneous Bifaces (USNM 82364). Five of these artifacts are stemmed projectile points (Fig. 13b–f) that almost certainly predate the

Mississippian components at Moundville. The sixth is a triangular biface (Fig. 13g) that may be a preform. All are made of tan or red cherts.

Conch Shell (USNM 8236). The Middleton collection includes an unmodified *Busycon contrarium* shell, 23 cm long (Fig. 15). This species has a natural range which spans the North American seashore from Texas to New Jersey. It is most abundant, however, in West Florida (Abbott 1974). The presence of this marine gastropod shell at Moundville is almost certainly the result of trade.

Summary

The descriptions made by Lupton and Middleton provide an interesting glimpse of the Moundville site as it appeared in the late nineteenth century, when the earthworks were less eroded than they were to become in subsequent years. A review of the evidence gathered by these early investigators not only sheds new light on the contents of some of the mounds, but also provides contextual information for a number of artifacts that have been previously illustrated in the literature. The salient findings can be summarized as follows:

1. As late as 1869, the remains of an earthen embankment could be seen along the southern edge of the site. This feature was almost certainly associated with the palisade wall that surrounded Moundville at the time of its occupation.

2. Excavations by Lupton in Mound O produced evidence that the earthwork had been built in at least three stages. This conclusion is supported not only by his observation of a floor within the mound, but also by the vertical distribution of the burials he encountered.

3. Lupton reported that, about 20 years prior to his visit, a skeleton with beads had been discovered in Mound G. If this hearsay is to be believed—and it is not clear that it should be—the report provides our first indication that Mound G contained burials, despite the fact that Moore did not find any in his subsequent work there.

4. The three stone palettes sent by Lupton to the Smithsonian and subsequently illustrated in various publications (Rau 1876: Figs. 150–151, Wilson 1890: Fig. 31[150–151], Holmes 1883: Pl. 57[1, 4]) were apparently excavated from a single burial at Moundville in 1866.

5. A drawing of Mound B made in 1882 suggests that the summit of this earthwork was originally terraced, somewhat in the manner of the ceremonial and domiciliary mounds at Besemer (DeJarnette and Wimberly 1941).

6. The Middleton collection contains a fragment of an oblong, red-slate gorget, apparently broken in the process of manufacture. The presence of this unfinished object at Moundville suggests that the fabrication of such gorgets—typically found in elite burials—may have been an activity carried on at or near the site itself.

Acknowledgments

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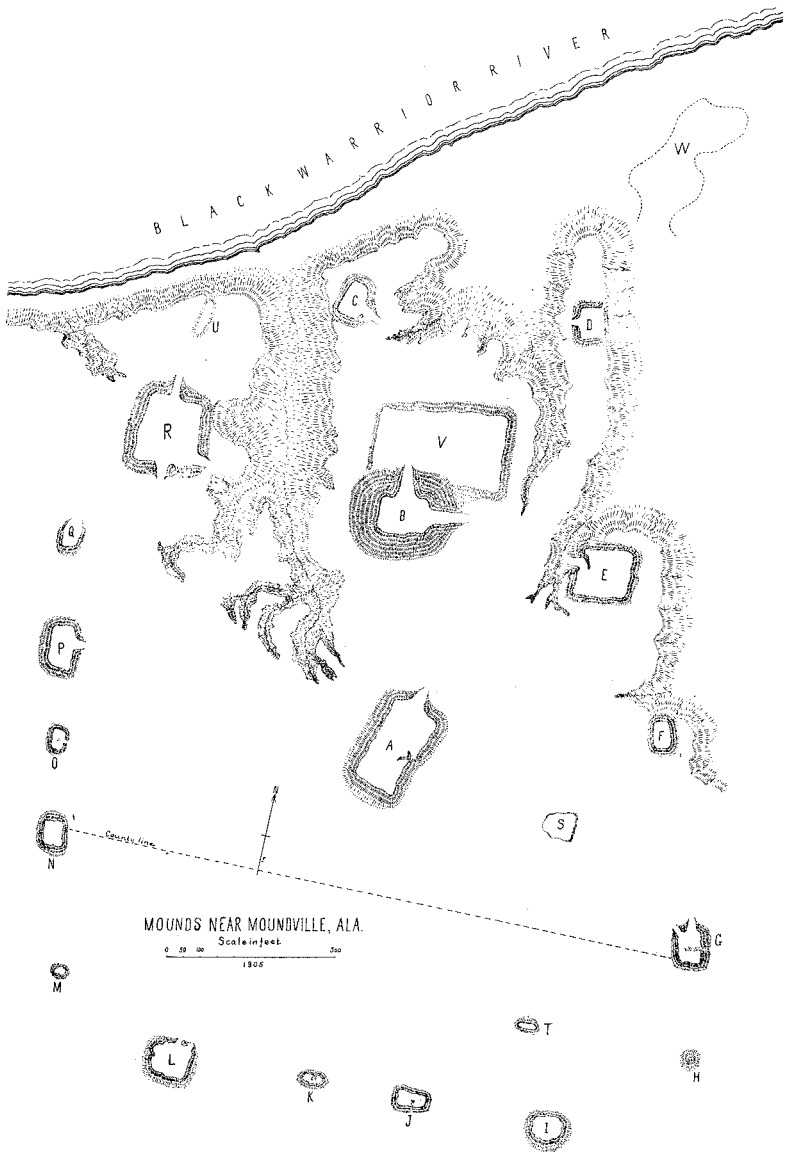


Fig. 1. Map of Moundville published by C. B. Moore in 1905 (reproduced from Moore 1905:129).

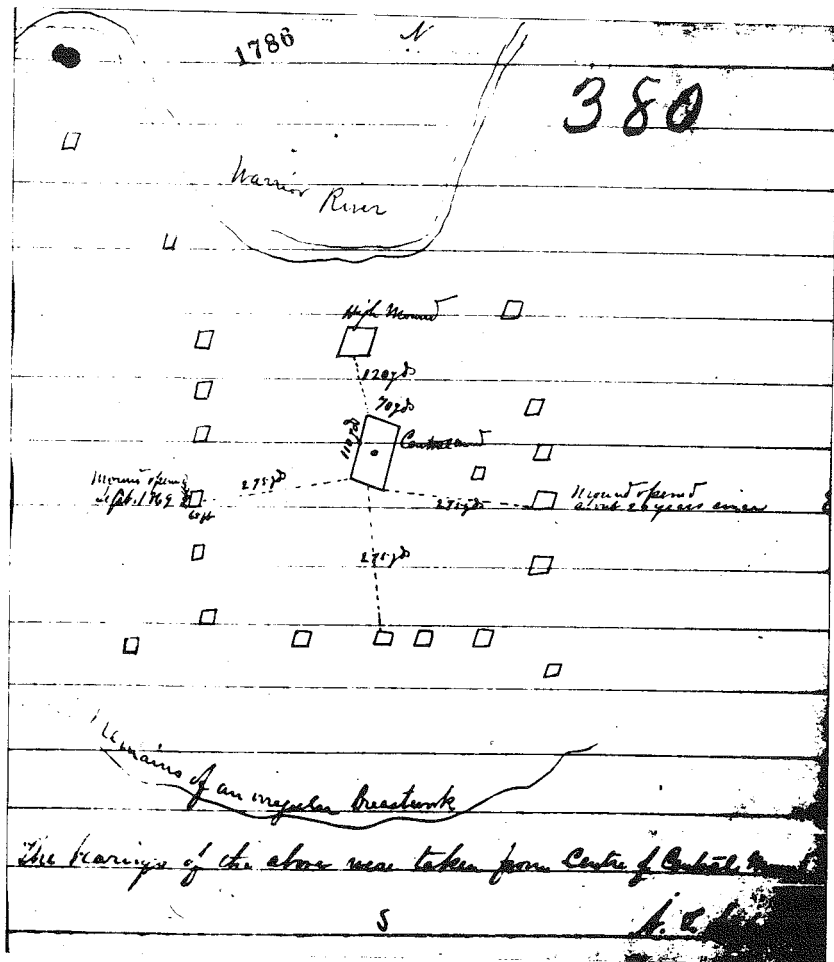


Fig. 2. Map of Moundville made by Nathaniel T. Lupton in 1869 (reproduced from Lupton 1869).

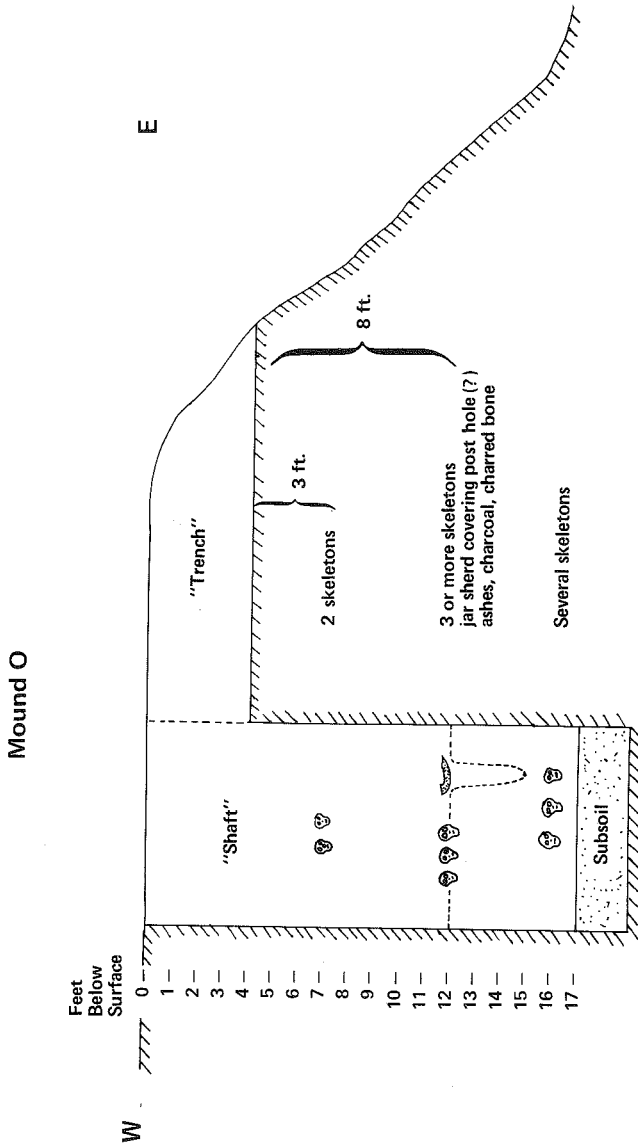


Fig. 3. Reconstructed profile of Lupton's excavation in Mound O.

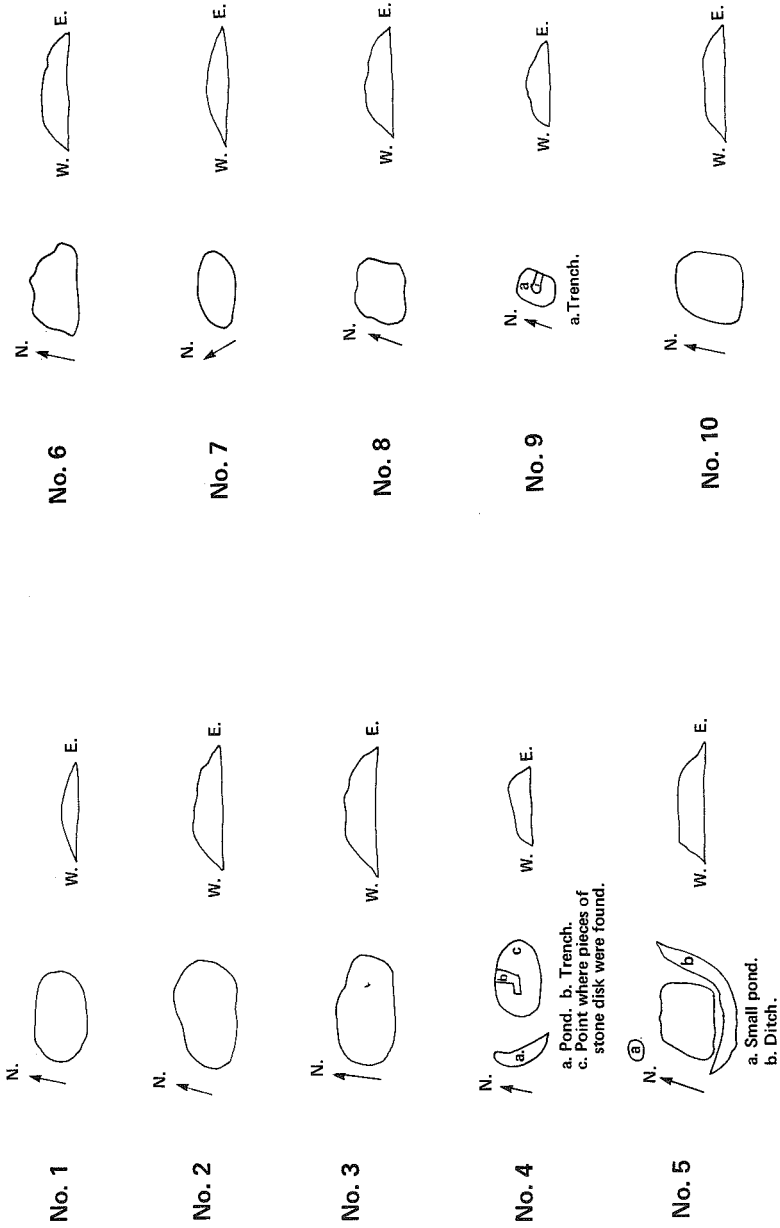


Fig. 4. Plan and profile views of mounds (redrawn from Middleton 1882).

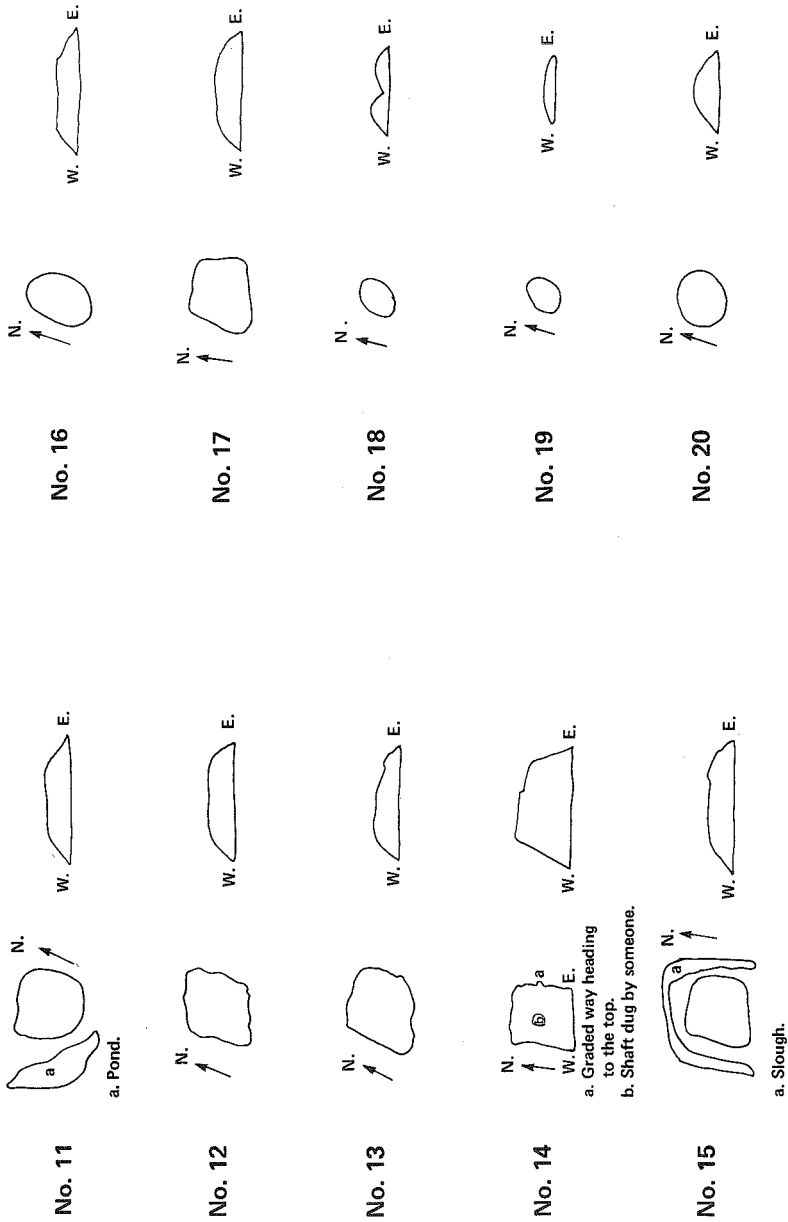


Fig. 4 (cont'd.). Plan and profile views of mounds (redrawn from Middleton 1882).

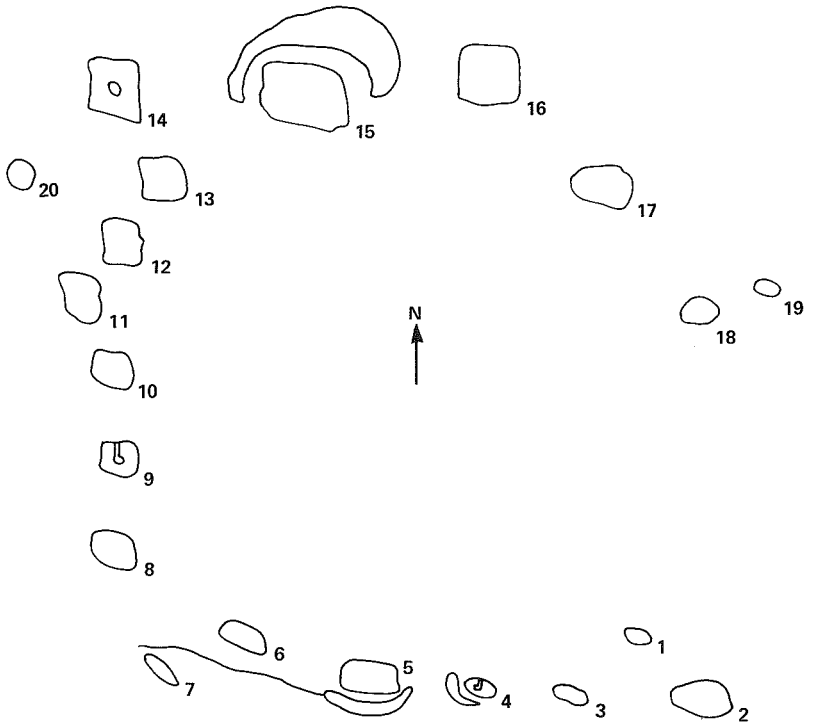


Fig. 5. Map of Moundville made by James D. Middleton in 1882 (redrawn from Middleton 1882).

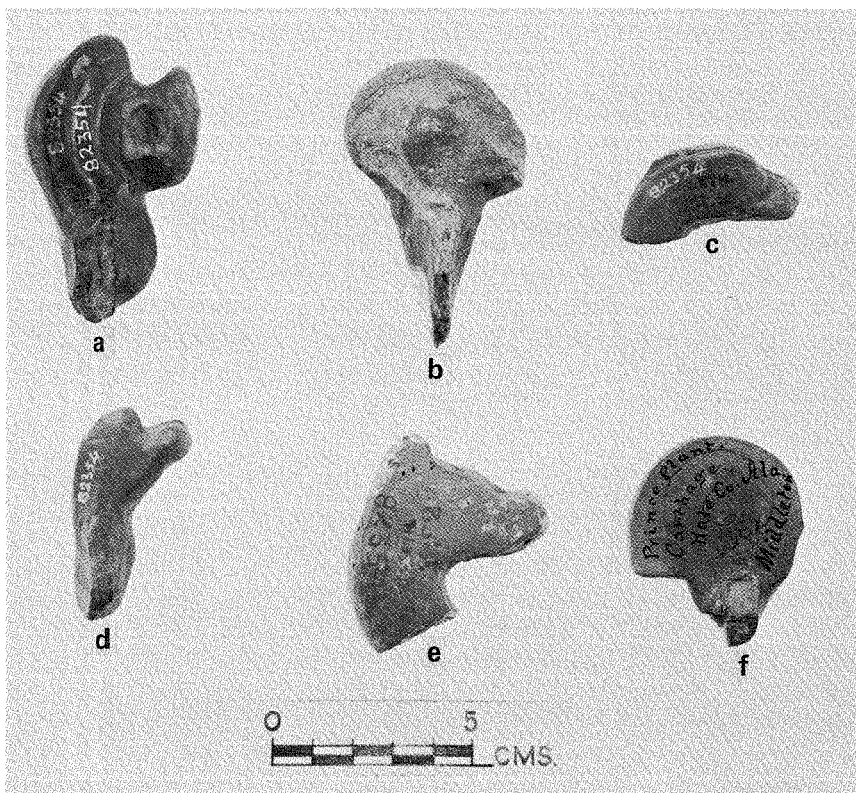


Fig. 6. Bell Plain rim effigies from bowls: *a-f*, Bell Plain, *var. Hale*. (NMNH catalog numbers: *a-f*, 82354).

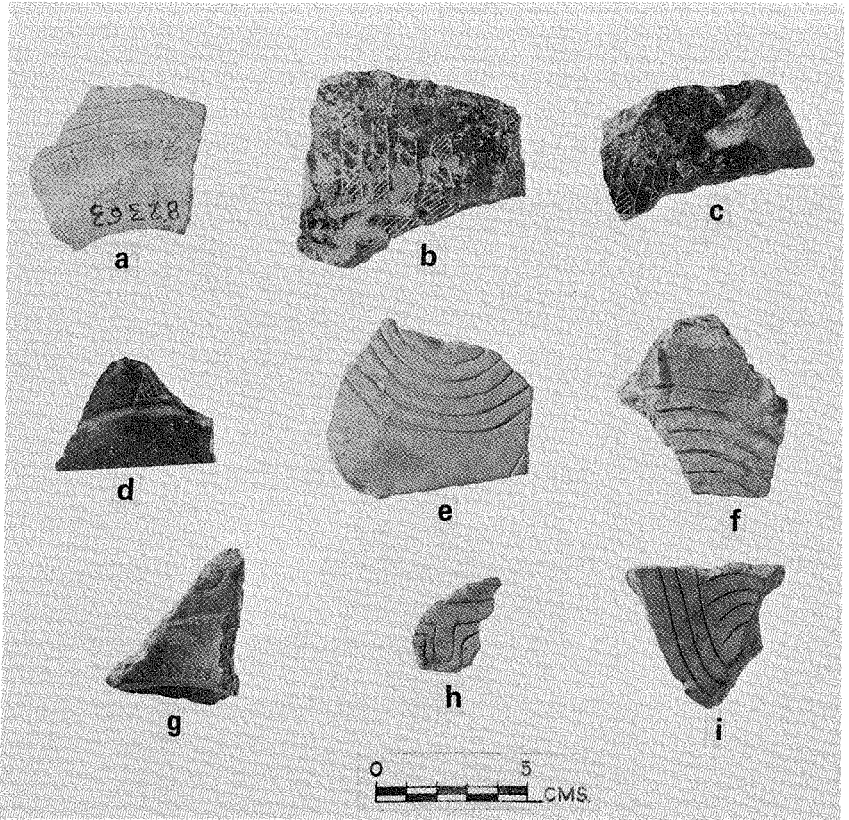


Fig. 7. Alabama River Incised, Carthage Incised, Moundville Engraved, and unclassified sherds: *a*, Moundville Engraved, var. *unspecified*, pedestal-base bottle; *b-c*, Moundville Engraved, var. *Hemphill*, hand motif; *d*, Moundville Engraved, var. *Wiggins*, slab-base bottle; *e-f*, Alabama River Incised, var. *unspecified*; *g*, Carthage Incised, var. *unspecified*, flaring-rim bowl rim; *h-i*, unclassified incised. (NMNH catalog numbers: *a*, 82363; *b-g*, 82367; *h*, 82363; *i*, 82367).

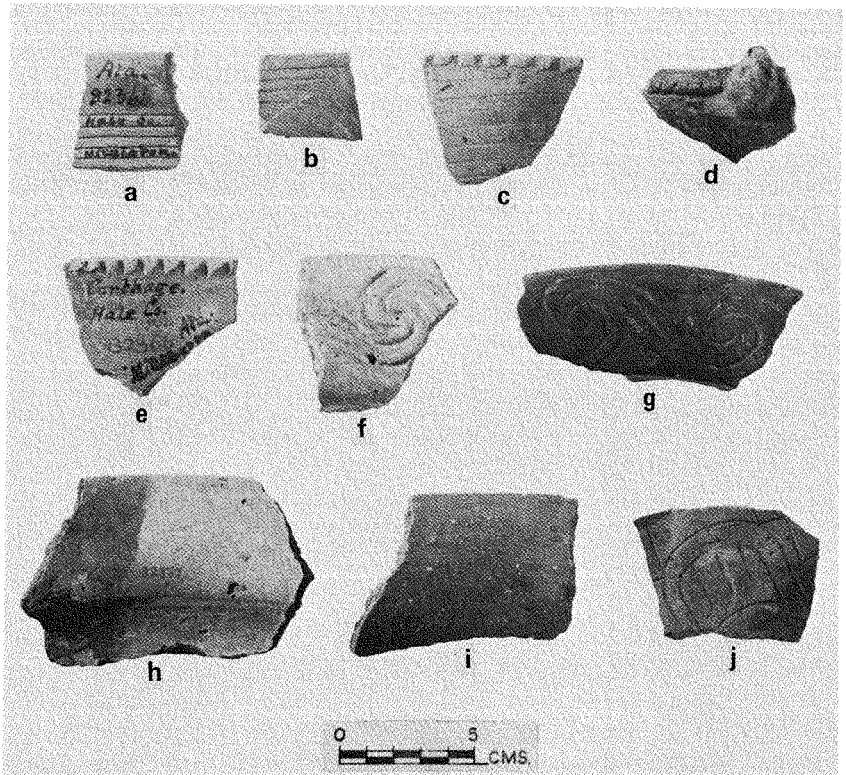


Fig. 8. Bell Plain, Carthage Incised, and Moundville Engraved sherds: *a*, Moundville Engraved, *var. Havana* (?), bowl rim, possibly a nonlocal vessel from the Mobile-Pensacola region on the Gulf Coast; *b-c*, Moundville Engraved, *var. Havana*, simple bowl rims; *d-e*, Bell Plain, *var. Hale*, simple bowl rims; *f-g*, Carthage Incised, *var. Carthage*, flaring-rim bowl rims; *h-i*, Bell Plain, *var. Hale*, flaring-rim bowl rims (*h* is red on white and *i* is red filmed); *j*, Moundville Engraved, *var. unspecified*, short-neck bowl shoulder fragment. (NMNH catalog numbers: *a*, 82366; *b*, 82362; *c*, 82366; *d*, 82362; *e*, 82366; *f-g*, 82363; *h-i*, 82362; *j*, 82363).

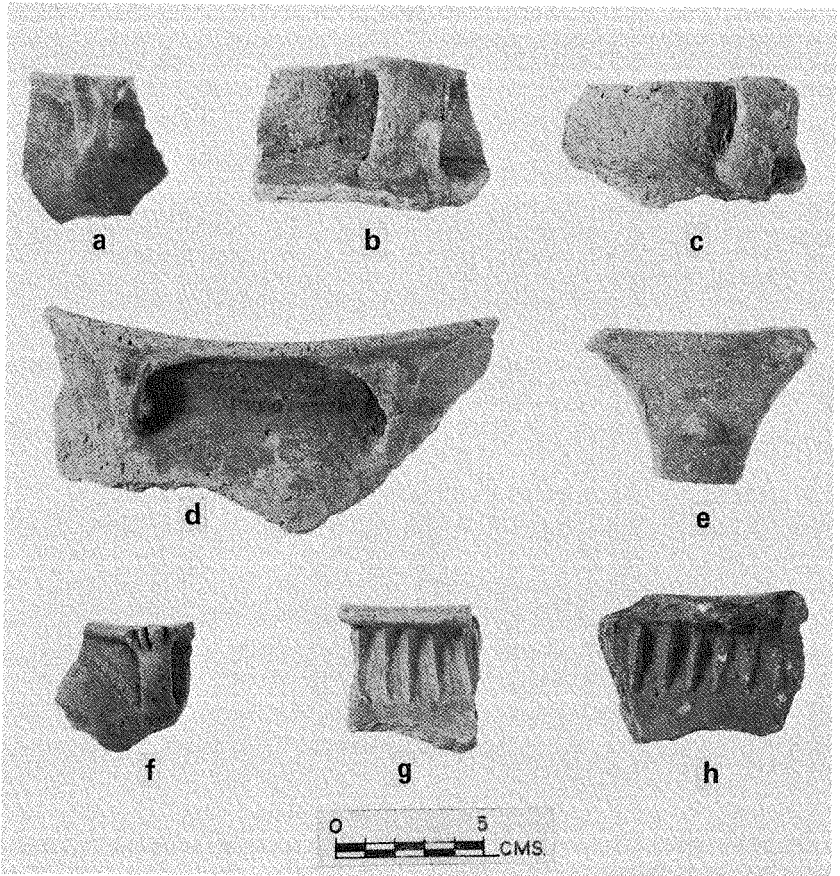


Fig. 9. Mississippi Plain and Moundville Incised sherds: *a-e*, Mississippi Plain, *var. Warrior*, standard jar rims with handles; *f*, Moundville Incised, *var. unspecified*, standard jar rim with handle; *g-h*, Mississippi Plain, *var. Warrior*, standard jar rims with applique neck fillets. (NMNH catalog numbers: *a*, 9342; *b-c*, 82367; *d*, 9345; *e-h*, 82367).

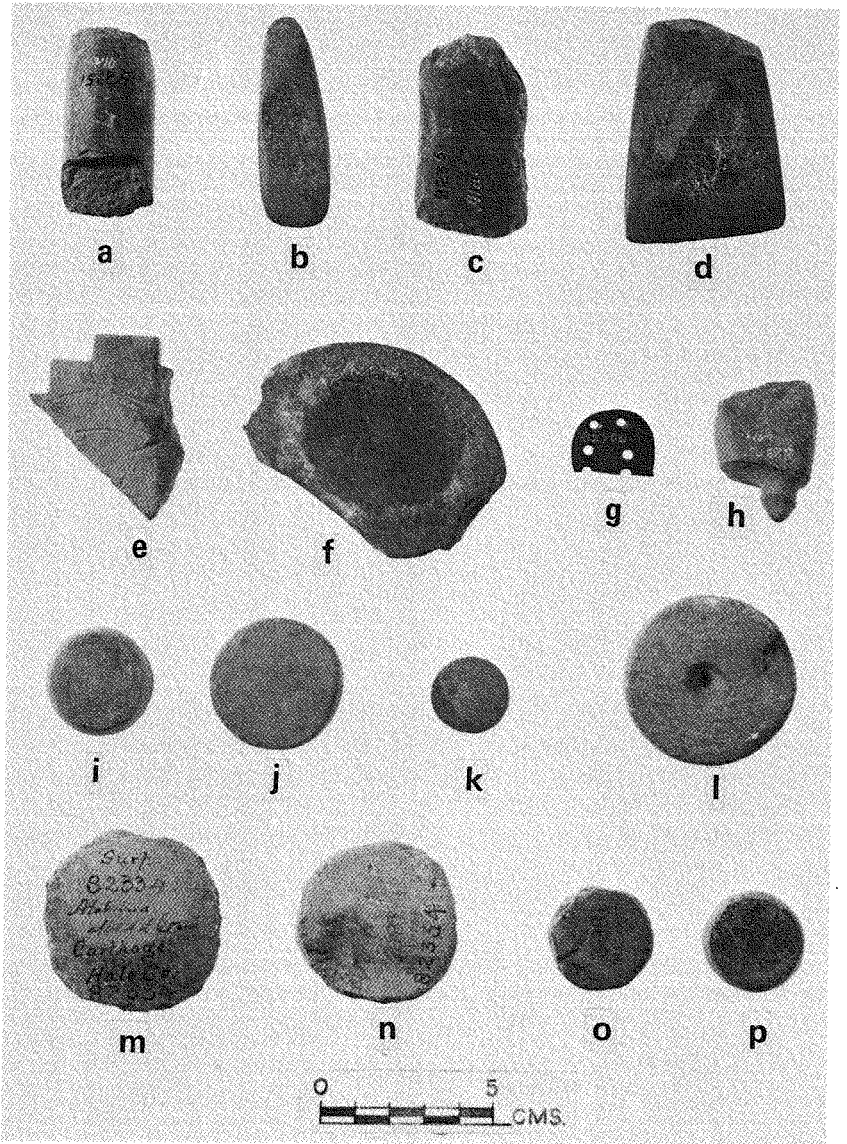


Fig. 10. Miscellaneous ground-stone and ceramic artifacts: *a*, cylindrical greenstone fragment, probably from the poll of a spatulate celt; *b-d*, small greenstone celts; *e*, palette fragment, incised; *f*, thin slate disc fragment; *g*, slate gorget fragment; *h*, sandstone drill; *i-l*, small stone discs (*k* is made of greenstone and the rest are of sandstone); *m-p*, small ceramic discs. (USNM catalog numbers: *a-d*, 82351; *e*, 82352; *f*, 82351; *g*, 82700; *h*, 82355; *i-k*, 82345; *l*, 9334; *m-p*, 82334).

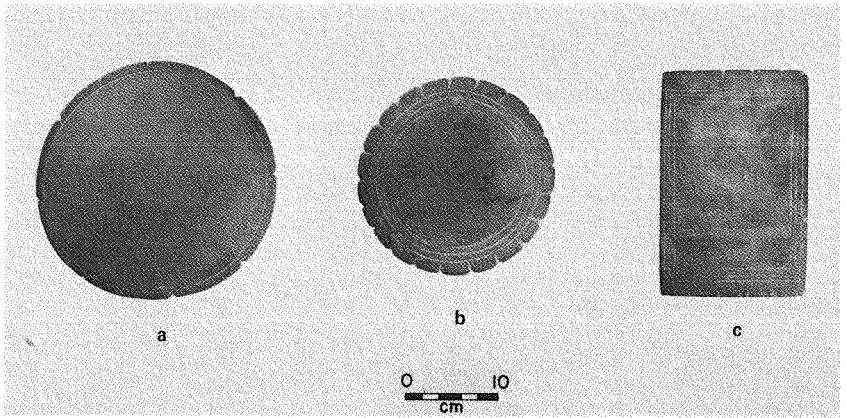


Fig. 11. Stone palettes. (USNM catalog numbers: *a*, 9331; *b*, 9332; *c*, 9333).

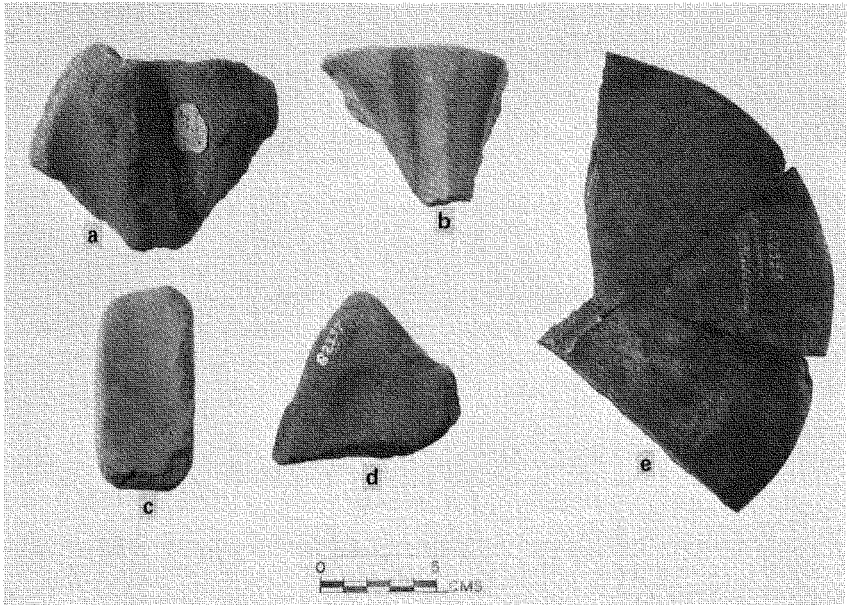


Fig. 12. Miscellaneous ground-stone artifacts: *a*, utilized sandstone slab with grooved surface; *b-c*, small sandstone abraders; *d*, utilized sandstone slab with pitted surface; *e*, palette fragment. (USNM catalog numbers: *a*, 82359; *b*, 9335; *c*, 82349; *d*, 82337; *e*, 82353).

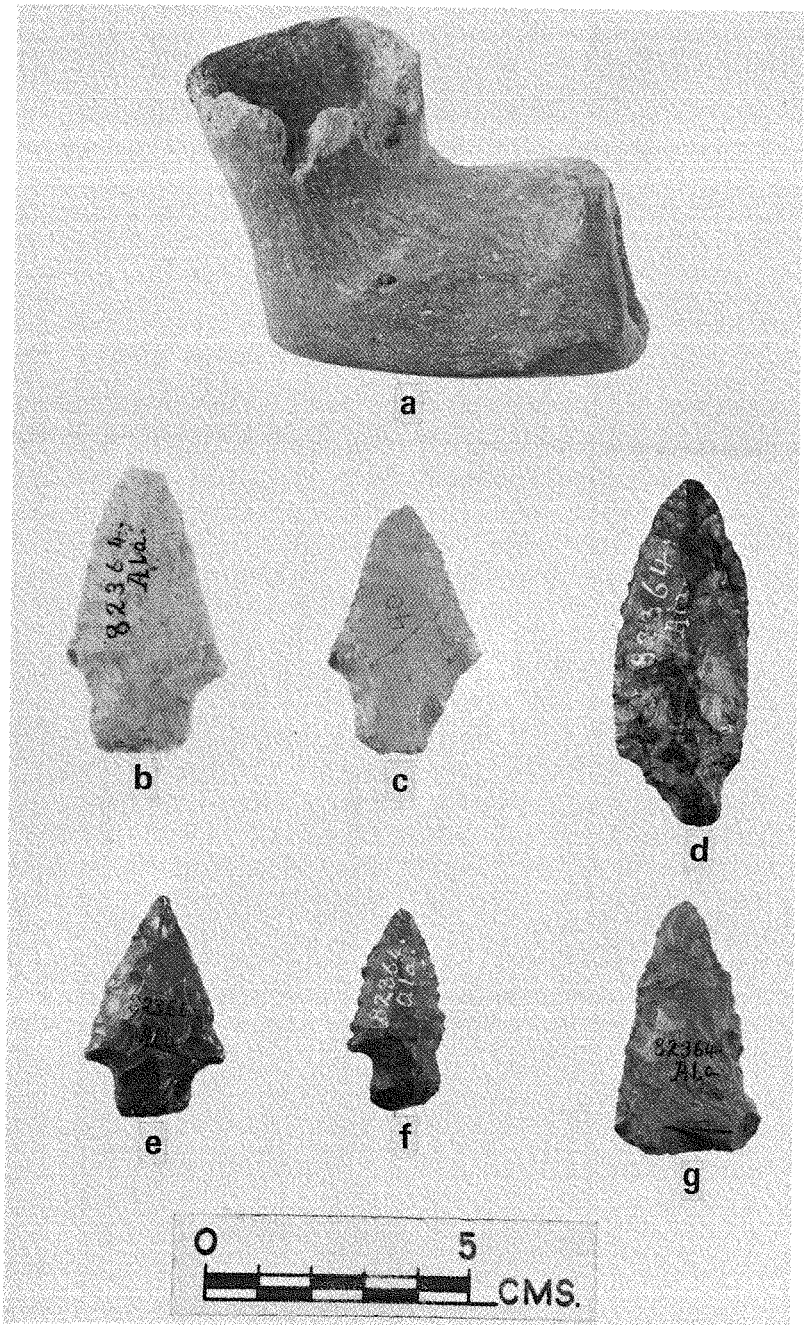


Fig. 13. Miscellaneous artifacts: *a*, ceramic elbow pipe; *b-g*, chert bifaces. (USNM catalog numbers: *a*, 82346; *b-g*, 82364).

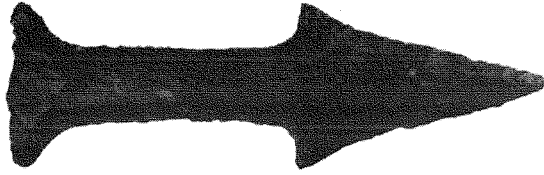


Fig. 14. Chert "dagger." (USNM catalog number 9330).

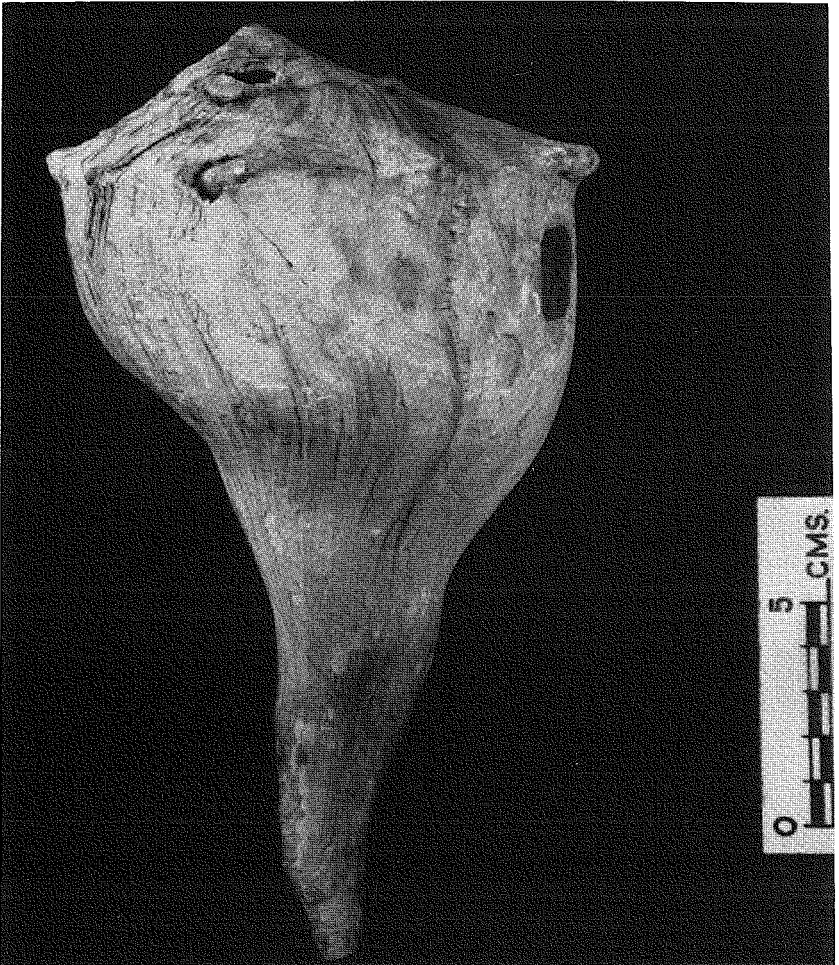


Fig. 15. Unmodified shell of *Busycon contrarium*. (USNM catalog number 82361).

TABLE 1
Sherds Collected by Lupton and Middleton

<i>Type, Variety</i>	<i>Middleton</i>		<i>Lupton</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Body</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Rim</i>	
Alabama River Incised, <i>unspecified</i>	2				2
Bell Plain, <i>Hale</i>	9	12*	6	4	31
Carthage Incised, <i>Carthage</i>		3			3
Carthage Incised, <i>unspecified</i>	2				2
Mississippi Plain, <i>Warrior</i>	27	19	12	3	61
Moundville Engraved, <i>Havana</i>		3			3
Moundville Engraved, <i>Hemphill</i>	2				2
Moundville Engraved, <i>unspecified</i>	3				3
Moundville Incised, <i>unspecified</i>		2			2
Unclassified incised	2		1		3
Total	47	39	19	7	112

*This count includes two painted flaring-rim bowl sherds. One is red on white, and the other is red overall.

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