

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

HUFF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: HUFF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE

Other Name/Site Number: 32MO11

2. LOCATION

Street & Number:

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Huff

Vicinity: X

State: North Dakota

County: Morton

Code: 059

Zip Code: 58555

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: _____

Public-Local: _____

Public-State: X

Public-Federal: _____

Category of Property

Building(s): _____

District: _____

Site: X

Structure: _____

Object: _____

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

_____ buildings

_____ sites

_____ structures

_____ objects

_____ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

Middle Missouri Subarea

National Historic Landmark Theme Study

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register

____ Determined eligible for the National Register

____ Determined not eligible for the National Register

____ Removed from the National Register

____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper_____
Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: DOMESTIC

Sub: Village Site

Current: LANDSCAPE

Sub: Park

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS:

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof:

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Huff Archeological Site is a fortified Indian Village located on the west bank of the Missouri River in Morton County, North Dakota. The site is situated on flat prairie land between two deep ravines eroded through a high terrace above the river bottoms. The Missouri River breaks rise about one-half mile southwest of the site.

The Huff site is surrounded by a continuous fortification consisting of a ditch and earthworks about 2,130 feet long. The fortification encloses three sides of a rectangular area of about 8.5 acres containing house depressions. The ditch is 15 feet wide and 2 feet deep. The soil excavated from the ditch was thrown inside the enclosed area where it is visible as a distinct low ridge. The fortification has ten bastions spaced at regular intervals. The side of the site facing the river is protected by a precipitous bank running roughly along the long axis of the site (Wood 1967:23).

There are at least 103 house depressions in the Huff village, which excavations have shown to represent predominantly long-rectangular houses typical of the Middle Missouri tradition. The houses are aligned in rows, but not so regularly as to be on streets. With the exception of one house, the long axis of each house extends northeast to southwest, with entrances facing away from the river. An exceptionally large house, located in the approximate center of the village, faces a large, open, sunken area which corresponds to the plaza in historic Mandan villages (Wood 1967:23-24).

Archeological research at the site began in 1905 when Emil R. Steinbrueck sketched the fortifications. Steinbrueck sketched a second map in 1908, and he worked with A.B. Stout to produce a third map in the same year. A fourth map, based on fieldwork by George F. Will and Herbert J. Spinden, was drawn in 1919. Thad Hecker drew a fifth map of the site in 1939 based on aerial photographs and a visit to the site. James Howard and W. Raymond Wood also produced maps of the site in conjunction with their excavations (Howard in 1959 and Wood in 1960) (Wood 1967:24-28).

The first excavations reported at the Huff site were accomplished in 1908 by A.B. Stout, who identified fire hearths in the southwest corner of two of the houses. Excavations by Thad Hecker in 1938-1939 (see Will and Hecker 1944:19-23, 60-61, 94-96) determined that the features shown on earlier maps to the north of the fortification ditch were natural. Hecker also fully excavated one of the houses in the village.

...one house was completely uncovered, as well as the side walls of two houses, about one-half of a house floor cut into by the river and corners of six houses. Test pits were sunk in the floors in twenty pits or depressions, and five cache pits were emptied [Will and Hecker 1944:19-23].

Hecker's work provided the first excavation of a long-rectangular house in North Dakota (Wood 1961:8). Will (1946) analyzed timbers from the 1938-1939 excavations and obtained tree-ring dates of A.D. 1485-1543, although these dates are considered tentative "in the light

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of the many complications attending tree-ring dating of which he was unaware" (Wood 1967:115).

James Howard excavated four houses and two bastions in 1959, tested several other areas and mapped the entire site (Howard 1962). In 1960, W.R. Wood excavated Houses 3-4 and 6-12, as well as ten other areas of the site, including the fortification ditch and the palisade line (Wood 1961:Table 1; 1967:28-31). "In the village center a large long-rectangular structure facing an open plaza is identified as the village ceremonial lodge" (Wood 1967:1). A National Science Foundation grant was obtained to undertake laboratory analysis of the data from the site for a research project entitled "Northern Plains Prehistory: A One Year Archaeological Study of Mandan Culture History" (Wood and Cressman n.d.). The 1960 excavations also yielded three human burials which were subsequently analyzed at the Laboratory of Physical Anthropology of the University of Kansas (Bass and Birkby 1962).

A series of five radiocarbon dates was obtained in 1960 (SI-178-180, SI-182-183). Two were rejected, one being "modern" (SI-183) and the other being too early (A.D. 1180 \pm 140 years: SI-182).

With the analysis of five additional radiocarbon samples, a corrected mean date for the Huff site has been calculated at A.D. 1484 \pm 52 years (Thiessen 1977:59-82). The eight dates used in that study are listed below (from Thiessen 1977:68, 77).

Sample	Date (A.D.)
SI-178	1640 \pm 190 (Wood 1967:115 gives \pm 90)
SI-179	1480 \pm 90
SI-180	1770 \pm 120
SI-181	1420 \pm 100
SI-446	1560 \pm 130
SI-447	1450 \pm 130
SI-448	1350 \pm 300
USGS-29	1510 \pm 55

Wood's excavations were conducted in conjunction with a bank stabilization project undertaken by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The purpose of the project was to stabilize the bank along the site to prevent erosion of the site into the Oahe Reservoir. The project entailed leveling a 100-foot wide strip of the site along the bank. Wood's excavations were limited to this strip in order to recover data which would otherwise have been lost (Wood 1961:9; 1967:28-29). The construction project was completed by 1967 and has proven effective in protecting the site. Despite the archeological excavations and construction activities on the site, most of the Huff Archeological Site remains undisturbed.

The State Historical Society of North Dakota acquired most of the Huff Archeological Site in 1910 and the remainder in 1932. The site, which is fenced, signed and open to the public, comes under the protection of the antiquities legislation of the State of North Dakota. The nominated area encompasses all of the state-owned lands associated with the site, including the village, the fortifications and a strip of land outside of the fortifications. Excavations at other

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earthlodge villages indicate that the area outside the fortifications may contain archeological remains associated with the village.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A___ B___ C___ DX

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: 6

NHL Theme(s): I. Peopling Places
5. ethnic homelandsV. Developing the American Economy
1. extraction and productionNational Register Areas of Significance: Archeology Prehistoric
Agriculture
Commerce
Community Planning and Development
Ethnic Heritage Native American

Period(s) of Significance: AD 1500 (± 150 years)

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: Mandan/Plains Village [Terminal Middle Missouri variant]

Architect/Builder: N/A

NHL Comparative Categories: I. Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations
B. Post-Archaic and Pre-Contact Developments
11. Plains Farmers
C. Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets
12. Prehistoric Settlements and Settlement Patterns

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Huff Archeological Site is significant for both the data it has provided and the data it still contains for the study of the prehistoric occupation of North Dakota.

The significance of this site is supported by its status as a contributing resource within the Middle Missouri Subarea National Historic Landmark Theme Study entitled "Village Sites of the Middle Missouri Subarea A.D. 1000 A.D. 1887 with a Focus on the Antecedents, Development, Spread, Influences, Achievements, Climax and Decline of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Cultures in North and South Dakota" (Winham, Wood and Hannus 1994).

This property is being nominated under Criterion D for a property that "has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history." In Winham, Wood, and Hannus 1994, the discussion of National Historic Landmark Criteria (pages 20-23), and the Statement of Significance (pages 26-33) provide the background to this landmark nomination. Specific research topics relating to prehistoric archeology are discussed on pages 33-48, including those listed in the Areas of Significance agriculture (page 34), ethnic heritage (page 36) and trade/commerce (pages 36-40). Community planning and development refers to the observations that the houses at the Huff Archeological Site appear to have a more orderly arrangement, in rows, than is apparent at many other Plains villages.

The Huff site is located within the Middle Missouri Subarea which Lehmer (1971) defined as the Missouri River valley from just above the mouth of the Yellowstone River in North Dakota to just below the mouth of the White River in South Dakota. Large scale archeological studies were undertaken in the Middle Missouri Subarea in conjunction with the construction of the four mainstem dams on the Missouri River in North and South Dakota. These studies resulted in a synthesis of the salient features of the archeology of the Plains agricultural villages in the Missouri River trench. Several variants of two traditions have been defined on the basis of the results of the surveys, tests and excavations undertaken. The Middle Missouri tradition (ca. A.D. 900-1675) included the Initial, Extended and Terminal variants; and the Coalescent tradition (ca. A.D. 1400-1862) included the Initial, Extended, Post-Contact and Disorganized variants (Lehmer 1971:25-33).

The Huff Archeological Site is representative of a group of sites associated with occupation of the Middle Missouri trench that can be described as one of the "largest and most extant collections of culturally-related prehistoric temperate zone village farming communities in the New World" (Tiffany personal communication, 1993).

The primary criteria utilized to determine significance for the individual sites included in the Middle Missouri Subarea National Historic Landmark Theme Study are integrity and preservation. While the Huff Archeological Site is not in pristine condition, having been partially impacted by erosion from the Missouri River (Lake Oahe), as well as by major archeological excavations, most of the site remains undisturbed with excellent integrity.

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Based on the results of his excavations at the Huff site, W.R. Wood defined the Huff phase of the Terminal Middle Missouri variant of the Middle Missouri tradition in 1967 (Wood 1967:131-137). The characteristics which defined the Huff phase of the Middle Missouri Variant were:

- (1) the rectangular fortification system with bastions;
- (2) the dense occupation of the village;
- (3) the arrangement of the houses in rows; and,
- (4) the types and relative quantities of types of artifacts.

The Huff site is synonymous with research into the prehistory of the Mandan culture. Analysis of the materials from the Huff site provided the impetus for Wood's investigations into the hypothesis "that Mandan Indian culture emerged about A.D. 1500 under the impact of trade and contact with semisedentary village peoples from the Central Plains, and with adjacent pedestrian nomads" (Wood 1967:1). The Huff site was originally excavated with the above hypothesis in mind.

Future excavations at the site should use micro recovery techniques (e.g., flotation) to recover botanical remains such as pollen and phytoliths, as well as seeds and carbonized material that would shed new light on the local ecology, gardening practices and diet. Any number of other specific studies would profit from modern recovery practices, the results of which would be determined by the research questions posed by, for example, lithic or other specialists.

Further investigation of the Huff Archeological Site would provide data useful in elucidating the ecological, economic and social implications of dense population settlements in the Middle Missouri Subarea. The Huff site is of particular importance among the known villages of the Terminal Middle Missouri variant because of its physical integrity and its role in the historical development of the present state of knowledge of Middle Missouri archeology.

As a site associated with the Terminal Middle Missouri variant, the Huff Archeological Site has the potential to address a number of specific research questions, such as its relationship to sites assigned to the earlier Extended Middle Missouri variant as well as comparisons with other Terminal Middle Missouri sites believed to relate to the proto-Mandan and some subgroups of the proto-Hidatsa. The site has the potential to refine the archeological chronology for the area, a critical issue if archeologists are to research the development of cultural groups through time. Well-preserved faunal and floral remains provide prospects for paleo-environmental modeling and the study of native subsistence practices. As discussed in the theme study (Winham, Wood and Hannus 1994), the documented architectural variability at the Huff site is a possible indicator of the development or invention (see Ludwickson n.d.) of the circular earthlodge of the historic period - a research topic that could be further explored at this site.

The Huff Archeological Site appears to be at least 80% (perhaps as much as 95%) intact and thus provides an excellent resource for studying inter-site variability and settlement behavior. As research continues to highlight the complexity of cultural developments and interactions in the Middle Missouri region, the Huff site lies in a significant position, linking the historic and

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prehistoric developments of Mandan culture. The excellent preservation of this site allows for the further evaluation of the architecture, fortifications, changes in material culture and subsistence patterns. The site is located within North Dakota's Southern Missouri River Study Unit (State Historical Society of North Dakota 1990) and Lehmer's (1971) Cannonball Region. As a village settlement with good to excellent integrity and preservation, the Huff site has exceptional regional importance and the potential to address specific topics such as those noted above, as well as nationally-significant topics relating to the development, spread and influence of Plains Village cultures in North America.

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

As a permanent village, the Huff site ranks in significance with other villages along the Missouri River that are National Historic Landmarks, including Big Hidatsa, Crow Creek, Arzberger, Molstad, and Langdeau. These permanent population centers are to be compared with similar settlements of horticultural groups in other areas of the United States, including the Hohokam, Anasazi, and Pueblo cultures of the southwest and the Mississippian societies in the southeast.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bass, W.M., and W.H. Birkby

1962 The First Human Skeletal Material from the Huff Site, 32MO11, and a Summary of Putative Mandan Skeletal Material. *Plains Anthropologist* 7:164-177.

Howard, James H.

1962 *Report on the Investigation of the Huff Site, 32MO11, Morton County, North Dakota.* Anthropological Papers No. 2. University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

Lehmer, D.J.

1971 *Introduction to Middle Missouri Archeology.* Anthropological Papers 1. National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Ludwickson, John

n.d. Origin and Evolution of the Plains Earth Lodge (Preliminary draft and notes provided to author March 1994 for limited citation in theme study).

State Historical Society of North Dakota

1990 *The North Dakota Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation: Archeological Component.* Archeology and Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck.

Thiessen, T.D.

1977 A Tentative Radiocarbon Chronology for the Middle Missouri Tradition. In *Trends in Middle Missouri Prehistory: A Festschrift Honoring the Contributions of Donald J. Lehmer*, edited by W. Raymond Wood. *Plains Anthropologist Memoir* 13:59-82.

Will, George F.

1946 *Tree Ring Studies in North Dakota.* Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 338. North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Will, George F., and Thad. C. Hecker

1944 The Upper Missouri River Valley Aboriginal Culture in North Dakota. *North Dakota Historical Quarterly* 11 (1 and 2):5-126. State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck.

Winham, R. Peter, W. Raymond Wood, and L. Adrien Hannus

1994 *Archeological Sites of the Middle Missouri Trench Village Cultures A.D. 1000 A.D. 1887 with a Focus on the Antecedents, Development, Spread, Influences, Achievements, Climax and Decline of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Cultures in North and South Dakota.* Archeology Laboratory, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Submitted to South Dakota State Historical Preservation Center, Vermillion. Project No. 46-93-80053.003.

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Wood, W. Raymond

1961 *The Huff Site, 32MO11, Oahe Reservoir Area, North Dakota: 1960 Excavations.* State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck.

1967 *A Interpretation of Mandan Culture History.* Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 198. River Basin Surveys Papers 39.

Wood, W. Raymond, and L.S. Cressman

n.d. *Mandan Culture History.* Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, Eugene. National Science Foundation Research Grant No. G-12970.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☒ Previously Listed in the National Register.

☐ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.

☐ Designated a National Historic Landmark.

☐ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #

☐ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office: North Dakota

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☒ Other (Specify Repository): State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, North Dakota

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 14 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

A 14 374250 5164070

B 14 374420 5163850

C 14 374240 5163730

D 14 374100 5163920

Verbal Boundary Description:

Boundary is delineated by the approximate rectangle for which vertices are marked by the UTM reference points indicated on the Huff 7.5' USGS quadrangle map.

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The nominated area is defined by a line starting at a point 1568.6 feet east of the northwest corner of Section 8, T136N, R79W; thence north 41° 10' west a distance of 38 feet; thence north 39° 20' east a distance of 320 feet; thence north 53° 44' east a distance of 450 feet; thence south 34° 52' east a distance of 854 feet; thence south 53° 40' west a distance of 674.5 feet; thence northwest 740 feet to the point of the beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated area encompasses all of the state-owned lands associated with the site including the village, the fortifications and a strip of land outside of the fortifications. Excavations at other earthlodge villages indicate that the area outside the fortifications may contain archeological remains associated with the village. The boundaries are identical to the National Register boundaries for this site. [Note that the UTM's (Eastings) given on the National Register form all read 375XXX when they should read 374XXX.]

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Date: April 30, 1994

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY

September 16, 1996

MAP FIGURES

1. USGS 7.5' Quadrangle Map (Huff, N. Dak), showing UTM reference points A, B, C and D defining the Huff Archeological Site.
2. Outline boundary of Huff Archeological Site submitted when nominated as the Huff State Historic Site to the National Register of Historic Places.
3. 1905 Steinbrueck plan of the Huff Archeological Site.
4. 1908 Steinbrueck plan of the Huff Archeological Site.
5. 1908 Stout plan of the Huff Archeological Site.
6. Wood's 1960 plan of the 1938-1939 and 1959-1960 excavations at the Huff Archeological Site.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Huff Archeological Site, overview aerial photograph (Dept. of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, EROS Data Center)
2. Huff Archeological Site, detailed aerial photograph.*
3. Huff Archeological Site, excavation of an earthlodge.*
4. Huff Archeological Site, excavation of the palisade.*
5. Huff Archeological Site, aerial view of excavations.*
6. Huff Archeological Site, east side (photograph by Winham 1993).
7. Huff Archeological Site, west side (photograph by Winham 1993).
8. Huff Archeological Site, south side (photograph by Winham 1993).
9. Huff Archeological Site, north side (photograph by Winham 1993).

(*photographs supplied by W. Raymond Wood)

FIGURES

- Figure 1. USGS 7.5' Quadrangle Map (Huff, N. Dak), showing UTM reference points A, B, C and D defining the Huff Archeological Site.
- Figure 2. Outline boundary of Huff Archeological Site submitted when nominated as the Huff State Historic Site to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Figure 3. 1905 Steinbrueck plan of the Huff Archeological Site (from Wood 1961:Map 3).
- Figure 4. 1908 Steinbrueck plan of the Huff Archeological Site (from Wood 1961:Map 5).
- Figure 5. 1908 Stout plan of the Huff Archeological Site (from Wood 1961:Map 6).
- Figure 6. Wood's 1960 plan of the 1938-1939 and 1959-1960 excavations at the Huff Archeological Site (from Wood 1961:Map 6).

PLATES

- Plate 1. Huff Archeological Site, overview aerial photograph.
- Plate 2. Huff Archeological Site, detailed aerial photograph.
- Plate 3. Huff Archeological Site, excavation of an earthlodge.
- Plate 4. Huff Archeological Site, excavation of the palisade.
- Plate 5. Huff Archeological Site, aerial view of excavations.
- Plate 6. Huff Archeological Site, east side (1993).
- Plate 7. Huff Archeological Site, west side (1993).
- Plate 8. Huff Archeological Site, south side (1993).
- Plate 9. Huff Archeological Site, north side (1993).