1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **FORT ST. PIERRE SITE**

Other Name/Site Number: Fort St. Peter, Fort St. Claude des Yasous, Yazoo Post, Site (23-M-5)

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: [redacted] Not for publication: X

City/Town: N/A Vicinity: X

State: Mississippi County: Warren Code: 149 Zip Code: _____

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	___	Building(s):	___
Public-local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	X
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
___	___	buildings
1	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
1	0	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Designated a NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

FEB 16 2000

by the Secretary of the Interior

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

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Defense	Sub:	military facility
Current:	Landscape	Sub:	unoccupied land

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS: N/A
Foundation:
Walls:
Roof:
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Site Type: The Fort St. Pierre Site contains the remains of a French colonial fort occupied between 1719 and 1729. It served as the center of a community known as the Yazoo Post. In the early 1720s this community, [redacted] Mississippi, was on the far northern frontier of French colonial Louisiana. The French soldiers and farmers settled near a series of small remnant Native American groups and interacted with them in numerous economic, social, and religious activities. Archaeological investigations conducted between 1974 and 1977 at Fort St. Pierre revealed two near-complete buildings, a bastion, a dry moat, an area where lead shot was produced, and numerous other features.

Environmental Setting: [redacted]

The bluffs are believed to be, for the most part, of eolian origin. These soils have the ability to stand in very steep faces, which explains the striking topography of deep gorges with almost perpendicular walls. At one time there was a rich topsoil on these bluffs, but most of that has disappeared as a result of agricultural activities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The region is currently blanketed by a mixed hardwood, pine forest (See Photograph 1).

Historical Background: The Yazoo Bluffs region is an extremely important historical and archaeological district (see Figures 1-2). In the first three decades of the eighteenth century this was one of the prime regions in the Mississippi Valley for French and Indian settlement. Because both European and Native American activity in the region was primarily confined to this thirty-year period, almost all of the sites can be tightly dated. This is a unique and unparalleled situation for any comparable expanse of land in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

The first recorded Frenchmen on the Yazoo River were the Jesuit missionaries de Montigny, La Source, and Davion. They arrived in 1698 and made contact with all the indigenous groups, but concentrated their proselytizing efforts on the numerically superior Tunica Indians (Shea 1861:75-79, 115-163; Swanton 1911:20; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 65:100-179). Davion maintained a mission in the region until 1706, when pressure from pro-English aboriginal groups forced the Tunica and their missionary to abandon the region and settle far [redacted] (Brain 1988:31; Delanglez 1935:447; Swanton 1911:310-311). French activity in the Yazoo Bluffs region waned until 1719, when Fort St. Pierre and a number of French concessions were established [redacted] The relationship of these French settlers with the surrounding Indian groups (Yazoo, Koroa, and Ofo) appears to have been primarily economic (Charlevoix

1923:233-235; Delanglez 1935:448; 1937:37-38; French 1869:142, 157-158; Gayarré 1846:178-179, 227; Giraud 1966:370-371; Mereness 1916:49, 51; Mulvihill 1931:18; Le Page du Pratz 1774:56-57; Phelps 1966:46; Rowland and Sanders 1929:411; Swanton 1911:333; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 67:314-317; Wilson 1965:112, 118).

Religious interaction was of little concern, as there is no evidence of a missionary in residence until 1727. Father Souel arrived in that year and was killed two years later when a combined force of local Indians killed the French inhabitants of the region and destroyed Fort St. Pierre (see Figure 6). The French never attempted to reestablish the post on the Yazoo River and subsequent aboriginal occupation along this tributary was minimal and sporadic (Claiborne 1880:44; Delanglez 1935:122, 195, 252-254, 451; Giraud 1991:381-382; Rowland and Sanders 1927:96-102; Swanton 1911:230, 233, 331; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:172-183).

Two periods, "missionary" (1698-1706) and "trader" (1719-1729), have been set up to distinguish changing French activities in the Yazoo Bluffs region (Brown 1979a, 1979b). A total of nine historic sites have been recorded and excavated in this region, all but two of which are Native American. The exceptions are Fort St. Pierre and Lonely Frenchman. Fort St. Pierre was occupied between 1719 and 1729. Lonely Frenchman probably has the same date range as it is believed to be a small French habitation associated with the fort. The Haynes Bluff site, a major mound center and the most important aboriginal site in the region, has deep prehistoric roots as well as a strong historic component (Brain 1988:196-248). All of the historic sites are aboriginal and date to the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century. Two of them have been even more tightly dated. Portland appears to have been a Tunica site of the missionary period, whereas Lockguard is thought to have been a Yazoo, Koroa, or Ofo Indian component of the trader period contemporary with Fort St. Pierre.

Archaeological Investigations: Until the 1970s, archaeological work in the Yazoo Bluffs region was minimal. James A. Ford was interested in the region because he felt the discovery and excavation of Fort St. Pierre would provide an excellent means of dating historical aboriginal sites in the vicinity. Ford viewed the site as a means to expedite the Direct Historical Approach (Steward 1942). Although Ford did indeed determine the actual location of the fort, he did not demonstrate its existence archaeologically (Ford 1936:98-103).

Several prehistoric sites were later recorded and investigated [redacted] by Philip Phillips (1970:425-437), but most contributions to historical archaeology in the region were made between 1964 and 1977. Stephen Williams of the Peabody Museum's Lower Mississippi Survey spent several days at the Burroughs site in 1964 excavating burials. Collections from the Russell site were also examined at this time. Other historical finds came from a railroad-cut made at the Haynes Bluff site in 1967 (Brain 1988:204).

The Lower Mississippi Survey (LMS) returned to the Yazoo Bluffs region in 1974. Under the direction of Jeffrey P. Brain, investigations occurred at Burroughs, Portland, Russell, and St. Pierre. The Haynes Bluff site was the prime focus of the Lower Mississippi Survey work in 1974 (Brown 1976a; Brain 1988:204-263). Also in that year, Ian Brown of the LMS teamed up with Bill Wright and Robert S. Neitzel of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to find and excavate Fort St. Pierre (Brown 1975a, 1975b). After 1974, the State of

Mississippi continued to support large-scale investigations at Fort St. Pierre between 1975 and 1977. Test excavations were also undertaken at Lonely Frenchman in 1975-1976, and at Anglo, Wrights Bluff, and Lockguard in 1976 (Brown 1978b; 1979a-c; 1983; 1990).

Fort St. Pierre was the principal source of European goods during the trader period. Its actual location was only proven archaeologically in 1974 (see Figure 7). The fort was built at the first contact point [redacted].

The 1974 excavations at Fort St. Pierre [redacted] A portion of the palisade trench and a number of trash pits were found in this area. It was also clear from the investigations that this part of the site had been abandoned at some time during the ten-year occupation range of the fort. The reduction in the physical size of Fort St. Pierre may have been directly related to the decline in its resident population, an event that was linked historically, to the failure of the John Law colonization effort.

Archaeological research conducted in 1975 and 1976 uncovered the southeastern portion of the fort (see Figure 8, Photos 2 and 3). Important features included a dry moat, a palisade line, part of the southeast bastion, an area where lead shot was produced, and two buildings--Structures B and C. The shot was produced by dropping molten lead from a tower into a vat of water. This is presently the only site in North America where this process of lead shot production has been observed archaeologically.

In aligning the archaeological plans with the historical drawings of the fort (see Figures 3-5), Structure B was interpreted to have been the commandant's headquarters. Excavation revealed it to have been a two-room structure with a depth of about 5.5 m. The architecture appears to have been *de-pièce-sur pièce* construction, in which horizontal members were laid one on top of another between upright posts placed at wide-spaced intervals (Brown 1976b; Peterson 1965:37).

All historic artifacts recovered at the site were piece-plotted in order to examine the spatial patterning of material culture. A nearest-neighbor analysis of the distribution of faience and wine bottle glass recovered in Structure B revealed considerable clustering around entrance ways and passages (see Figure 9). This patterning probably records the universal trait of human clumsiness in walking through narrow places. The detection of such patterns can be extremely useful in defining structural arrangement in other situations where wall trenches or stone foundations either are no longer apparent or never existed at all (Brown 1978b).

Structure C (see Figure 8 and Photos 2 and 3) was either the kitchen or the officers' barracks. It was divided into three rooms: a large one to the west, and two smaller ones of equal size to the east. This structure was about the same width (5.2 m) as Structure B, but it was greater than 9 m long. Its total length could not be determined because the northern wall of the building [redacted] A number of architectural forms are apparent in Structure C, including *de-pièce-sur pièce* along the southern and eastern walls, and *poteaux en terre* construction along the northern wall (Peterson 1965:26-27).

The posts in both buildings, as well as in the southern palisade line, were removed during the occupation of the fort, a phenomenon that parallels that which was observed in the northwestern portion of the site in 1974. Excavations along the western edge of the site provided an explanation for this removal. In this area two thick layers of deposition were discovered. A series of wall trenches were dug into the subsoil on the same level as Structures B and C (see Figure 8). These trenches demarcate structures of some sort, but too many pieces of the puzzle are missing to determine the number of structures or their orientation. A thick grayish-black soil layer occurred above the wall trenches. This layer had surprisingly few artifacts within it. On top of this layer was a lens of burned plank stains that continued north for at least 15 m beyond the limits of our excavations (see Figure 10). And above this burned lens was a thick brown silt topsoil layer that capped the entire site. The current interpretation is that the size of the fort (or at least the part that was occupied) shrank over time relative to its decreasing population. The burned area along the western edge of the site is believed to have been the part of the fort which was occupied at the time of the 1729 massacre.

A dry moat was situated parallel to the southern curtain of the fort (see Figure 8). It seems to have been used primarily for drainage. A great deal of historic European artifacts were found within the moat, as were a number of nearly complete aboriginal pots. These vessels were probably the products of contemporary Yazoo, Koroa, or Ofo peoples of the trader period as they were found in a sealed context. The types and varieties of whole pots found in the moat have been used to identify contemporary sites surrounding Fort St. Pierre. Also, the historic artifacts from Fort St. Pierre, such as European ceramics, white clay tobacco pipes, gunflints, and iron gun parts, axes, buckles, buttons and knives, and the surrounding French and Indian sites in the Yazoo Bluffs region have been used to develop models of change and continuity in Native American lifeways as they experienced colonial impact (Brown 1979a, 1979b, 1979c).

Site Integrity: Although the location of Fort St. Pierre was a part of the local lore, its actual preservation was not verified until 1974. There does not appear to have been much impact on the integrity of the site since its destruction in 1729. During the Civil War it served as a camp of sorts, because various military hardware and uniform regalia occasionally turn up in the investigations. It served as an orchard at one time and was probably under cultivation periodically in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The fact that it has been possible to reconstruct activity areas from the study of piece-plotted artifacts (Brown 1978b) indicates there has been very little disturbance of the ground. Despite four seasons of excavation at Fort St. Pierre, approximately fifty percent of the site still remains unexcavated and is in an excellent state of preservation. Approximately one-half of the fort was excavated between 1974 and 1977. The eastern wall of the fort and its associated structures, most of the plaza, and perhaps a portion of the northeastern bastion still survive. [redacted] of the fort has not been investigated at all, and it is probable there are related structures in this area.

A great deal of disturbance, [redacted] occurred in the early twentieth century in the area surrounding the fort site. Considering all the earth movement, it is remarkable that the fort site itself remained largely untouched. Until 1974, the remains of Fort St. Pierre [redacted] (see Figure 7), with only the periodic [redacted]

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 X B__ C__ D X

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: Criteria 1 and 6

NHL Theme:
I. Peopling Places
6. encounters, conflicts, and colonization
4. community and neighborhood
V. Developing the American Economy
6. exchange and trade

Areas of Significance: Archeology (Historic Non-Aboriginal), Military, Exploration and Settlement

Period(s) of Significance: 1718-1729

Significant Dates: December 11, 1729

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: French

Architect/Builder: N/A

Historic Context:
I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
2. Establishing Intercultural Relations
i. Trade Relationships
3. Varieties of Early Conflict, Conquest, or Accommodation
c. The New Demographics
1. Disease and Massacres: Their Cultural and Biological Effects

II. EUROPEAN COLONIAL EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT
B. French Exploration and Settlement -- Settlement
3. Mississippi Valley

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

Summary Statement of Significance: The Yazoo Bluffs region is located about half way between two major French colonial population centers (Mobile/New Orleans in the south and the Illinois country in the north) in what was a critical buffer zone. Less than 100 miles to the south of the Yazoo Bluffs the Natchez Post was established among the powerful Natchez Indians in the second decade of the eighteenth century. Since 1670 the English had made great inroads into the Mississippi Valley. They had already impacted the Natchez by the turn of the eighteenth century, and the Chickasaw of north central Mississippi were fully allied with the English by that time. To help ward off further encroachments, Fort St. Pierre and its related French community were established midway between the Chickasaw and the Natchez, thus serving as an important buffer settlement.

The establishment of Fort St. Pierre also resulted in the formation of important economic ties with the small remnant Native American groups (Yazoo, Koroa, and Ofo) that inhabited the Lower Yazoo River region. The success of French colonial endeavor in the Mississippi Valley depended on close and friendly ties with such groups (Brown 1992). There were no major groups in the Yazoo Bluffs region after 1706, following the departure of the Tunica; only small scattered villages of mixed populations. France was concerned with this region primarily to the extent that the English were, and what happened there is typical of what occurred in other frontier situations. The small Indian groups that lived in the Yazoo Bluffs region were alternately swayed by first one colonial power and then the other, but once the Indians disappeared, the region lost its significance and received no further attention.

French influence in the Yazoo Bluffs region occurred in two major pulses, the "missionary" period (1698-1706) and the "trader" period (1719-1729), the latter corresponding to the occupation of Fort St. Pierre (Brown 1979a-b). In the first three decades of the eighteenth century this was one of the prime regions in the Mississippi Valley for French and Indian settlement. Because both European and Native American activity in the region was primarily confined to this thirty-year period, almost all of the sites can be tightly dated. This is a unique and unparalleled situation for any comparable expanse of land in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

In the case of Fort St. Pierre, its ten-year occupation makes it a key for dating sites in the Yazoo Bluffs region and beyond. To understand the relationships between occupants of various sites archaeologically, it is absolutely fundamental to establish contemporaneity, and Fort St. Pierre has been a perfect vehicle for such studies.

On another dimension, the structures and associated artifacts discovered at Fort St. Pierre have provided views of life at an important colonial French fort of the eighteenth century. The excavation of two near-complete structures has contributed markedly to our understanding of early eighteenth-century French, frontier architecture. By piece-plotting the artifacts contained within and around these structures, we have also learned much about the various activities at such sites. One form of armament technology observed at Fort St. Pierre is unprecedented. It is clear that lead shot, so important a form of ammunition, was produced by dropping molten

lead from a tower into a vat of water. This is the only site in North America where this process of arms production has been observed archaeologically.

Only one other fortification site in the Lower Mississippi Valley is comparable with Fort St. Pierre--Fort Rosalie in Natchez (Elliot 1990; Giraud 1991:392-393; 1993: 155-156). Although Fort Rosalie is extremely important too, it should be pointed out that it had a longer period of occupation than Fort St. Pierre (the artifacts, consequently, are not as tightly dated). Also, the plateau upon which Fort Rosalie once sat has been occupied more or less continuously. Consequently, the Fort Rosalie site may have received far more disturbance than Fort St. Pierre. It should also be stressed that there has been no significant archaeological research conducted at Fort Rosalie. Although Fort Rosalie figures prominently in the history of French-Indian relations, Fort St. Pierre is truly a one-of-a-kind site. It is significant from an archaeological point of view because it was an important focus in the history of French-Indian relations, it was occupied for only a decade, it was destroyed rapidly (resulting in sealed features), and it has received intensive archaeological investigation. For all these reasons, Fort St. Pierre should be a National Historic Landmark.

French Colonization of the Yazoo Bluffs Region

The first recorded French-Indian contact in the Yazoo Bluffs region was in 1698. In that year the Recollect missionaries De Montigny, La Source, and Davion descended the Mississippi and made brief stops among the Tunica and Taënsa villages along the Yazoo River before returning to their headquarters among the Arkansas tribes. The Tunica were suffering from a severe epidemic at the time (Giraud 1974:56), but the first meeting with the missionaries was extremely friendly and the French anticipated close future relationships with the two tribes.

There has been some question as to where the Tunica were actually situated along the Yazoo River. De Montigny reported the 1698 Tunica location [redacted] (Shea 1861:80-81). D'Iberville, among the Taënsa in 1699, was told by his hosts that their enemies, the "Tonicas," occupied the first village [redacted] (Swanton 1911:308), thus agreeing with La Source's account. Davion returned to the Tunica in 1699 and established his mission (Swanton 1911:20). There appears to have been a movement of some sort at this time as M. le Sueur, visiting the area in the spring of 1700, reported that Father Davion and the Tunica were located seven leagues up the river, rather than four as suggested earlier. Father Gravier also visited the Tunica in 1700. He recorded the distance to the mission [redacted]. André Pénicaut, who accompanied Le Sueur, noted that the "Tonicas" were situated, in order of ascent, after the "Yasoux" and "Offogoulas" (Swanton 1911:308). Pénicaut was often quite casual in dating events and recording observations, and so whatever he presented must be regarded with some caution. However, he was a prolific writer and his accounts are often quite detailed. The problem is sorting out the good from the bad. Daniel Coxe listed the Tunica second after the "Yassouees" (Coxe 1940:24), but it is not clear to which time he was referring. He also did not visit the region.

Although more evidence is required, it is possible that the principal settlement of the Tunica shifted upstream shortly after French contact. Perhaps the placement of Father Davion's mission in a central location to all the local aboriginal groups was responsible for the shift in settlement which appears to have occurred. The Tunica, being the most numerous, and presumably the most powerful group, may have wished to be closer to the mission and its associated benefits.

The year 1702 was a turning point in the history of the Tunica, as it was in this year that Davion fled from his mission. Pénicaut attributed this action to Davion's destruction of the idols in the Tunica temple and the hostile reaction which ensued (Swanton 1911:309), but perhaps of greater importance was the murder of Father Foucault and two Frenchmen by four Koroa Indians who were guiding this party from the Arkansas to Davion's mission (Delanglez 1935:34; Swanton 1911:330). A number of reasons have been given for what occurred. It is possible that the guides were mistreated, or that they desired the French goods, or even that they were encouraged by the Arkansas to perform these actions (Delanglez 1935:34), but one thing which is clear is that their actions were condoned by a number of local aboriginal groups. The Chakchiuma may have been involved in the murder, but it is definite that the Yazoo were. After the deed was done, the Koroa shared the booty with their Yazoo allies (Delanglez 1935:34).

Englishmen in the Yazoo Bluffs Region

The anti-French sentiments exhibited by the indigenous Yazoo area populations were undoubtedly the result of English activity. English traders were well established in lands claimed as part of French Louisiane (the historic name used by the French for the territory; it will be used throughout this nomination)throughout the early eighteenth century. Their greatest influence was among the Chickasaw (Le Page du Pratz 1774:90), but they also infiltrated among groups west of the Mississippi River. Bénard de la Harp, among some Wichita groups on the Arkansas River in 1719 was understandably surprised and dismayed to see a Cherokee Indian appear laden with British goods to trade with these Indians (Wedel and Wedel 1976:18). English influence was felt even earlier, the focus of their activity having been on the Indian slave trade (Delanglez 1935:18; Swanton 1911:39). English traders reached the Mississippi long before the first Recollect missionaries arrived at the Taënsa, and when Father Gravier visited the Arkansas groups in 1700, he noticed that they possessed several guns which had been brought, along with a quantity of other goods, by an English trader in the previous year in order to secure their loyalty (French 1869:63; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 65:117).

It is apparent that English traders also exerted some influence over the Yazoo Indians at the turn of the eighteenth century, which suggests that they played a role in instigating the murder of Father Foucault. Several days prior to the murder, the Yazoo were courted by a British trader. According to Father Davion:

> This chief (Yazoo) seemed to side with the French; but he had on so many occasions shown himself to be the friend of the English, that it was useless for him to try to persuade us he was our friend. Only a few days before (Foucault's murder), an Englishman had come, and slaves were bought; this Englishman highly praised by the Yazoos was to stay among them. He was rich, they said, made great presents, whereas the French were only beggars [Father Davion in Delanglez 1935:447].

Father Davion feared a conspiracy, and deserted his mission after hearing of the Foucault murder. The Tunica desired his return (French 1869:96), but Governor Bienville demanded justice first. Davion would be allowed to return to the Tunica on the condition that they punish the Koroa and Yazoo offenders. Bienville also added, "that they should bring him the English that might be found among them after having plundered their storehouse" (Swanton 1911:310). Le Page du Pratz may have referred to this storehouse when he described the Yazoo region some 20 years later, "The village of the Indians (Yasous) is a league from this settlement; and on one side of it there is a hill, on which they pretend that the English formerly had a fort; accordingly there are still some traces of it to be seen" (Le Page du Pratz 1774:56). The Tunica fulfilled their part of the bargain as the Koroa murderers were subsequently killed. An English trader is reported to have been imprisoned by the Tunica at that time also. Davion returned to his mission in 1705 and remained with the Tunica, intermittently, for the next 15 years (Swanton 1911:311-313).

Having alienated the other groups along the Yazoo River by their close alliance with the French, the Tunica were forced to reconsider their position when the embittered English trader mentioned above ended up assembling the Chickasaw, Alibama, and other groups against the Tunica. Around 1706 the Tunica decided to leave the Yazoo Bluffs region and migrate south to the mouth of the Red River. This move also brought them closer to the French settlements (Swanton 1911:311). It seems that a group of Tunica may have split off from the main branch prior to 1706 and settled somewhere between the Yazoo River and the Red River, because Davion stated that he passed a Tunica settlement on his way downriver in 1702. He did not stop until reaching the Houmas, where Father de Limoges was stationed (Delanglez 1935:34). It is also possible that Davion confused the Tioux with the Tunica, because of their close cultural ties. Tunica history does not of course end at this point (see Brain 1979 and 1988), but because they no longer had substantial involvement in the Yazoo Bluffs region, they will not be discussed further in this nomination.

French Reaction to the English in the Yazoo River Area and John Law's Mississippi Company

With the termination of the "missionary period" in the Yazoo Bluffs in 1706, there was a hiatus of about 13 years in the documented relations between the French and Indians for this region. Louisiane and France were deeply involved in the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713) (known in America as Queen Anne's War) at this time and lacked the ability to reestablish contacts with the Yazoo River groups. England took advantage of French strategic weakness in the Yazoo River area by strengthening trade relations in this region. In 1708, Thomas Welch met with a number of different aboriginal groups, including the Yazoo and Koroa, to plan a coordinated attack on French Mobile. Five years later Price Hughes, a Welshman, even attempted to establish a settlement in the Yazoo Bluffs region (Crane

1929:85; 101-102). The French clearly needed a permanent settlement in this area if English penetration was to be prevented (Delanglez 1935:434). As early as 1716 plans were made to establish a fort among the Yazoo River groups, and Bienville was to be the commander of it. However, these plans were never carried out (Delanglez 1935:77). A year later (1717), when John Law's Company of the West was created, the hopes for a Yazoo Post were revived.

The end of the War of Spanish Succession had left France nearly in a state of financial bankruptcy. However, in May of 1716, Louis XIV seized upon the ideas of a Scotsman, named John Law, who proposed to establish a private bank in Paris. This bank issued paper money, or bank notes, which carried the imprint of the French king, and were supposed to be redeemable with metal species (gold or silver). In fact the only thing that made the notes acceptable to the French people was a blind faith in their value as money.

> The bank was successful from its inception. Law had now only to maintain the credit he had established. This he did by founding the Company of the West. The disharmony and subsequent failures in Louisiana were generally not known in France. The colony, indeed, was still greatly esteemed for its reported magnificence and fertility, its abundant products, and its rich mines which were said to be more extensive than those of Peru and Mexico. Law, using the anticipated wealth of this vast colonial empire as security, was supremely confident that his bank would underwrite and eventually pay off the national debt. Soon the bank became the main repository for royal funds; its administration by private directors and shareholders was anomalous; and in December 1718, the regent and Law converted it into a royal or national bank. Law remained as director [Caruso 1963:174].

To attract financial investors in the Company of the West, whose money would be deposited in the national bank -- hopefully enough to cover bank notes it issued -- Law hired a host of promoters who published numerous pamphlets on the colony of Louisiane, picturing it as a second Garden of Eden, where lumps of refined gold abounded for the taking, silver was so common it would be used as paving stones, and diamonds formed on flowers from morning dew (Caruso 1963:175). The Company of the West shares appeared to double in value, a yearly dividend of 12 percent was declared by Law for shareholders, and those who sold their shares first soon acquired considerable wealth, fueling the demand for the national bank to issue more shares. Law, in mid-1718, was given the authority to incorporate two other French royal colonial trading concessions, the East India Company and the China Company, into his Company of the Indies, better known in the Americas as the Mississippi Company (Caruso 1963:174).

Law intended to ship 6000 European colonists and 3000 African slaves annually to Louisiane to create a population base for the Louisiane colony. However, during the years of the Company's control of Louisiane (1717 to 1721) only a little over 7000 Europeans were transported, and many of these initial immigrants were convicted salt smugglers (Hall 1992:7). Upon arrival in the Louisiane port site of Old Biloxi the European immigrants found no provisions had been made to feed or house them, causing many of them to succumb to illness. By 1726, it was estimated that less than 2000 of these immigrants had survived their stay in Louisiane (Hall 1992:6-8).

In December of 1718, Law absorbed the Senegal Slave Trade Company, and by the summer of 1719 he had arranged to ship 500 slaves to Louisiane to provide much needed labor for the colony (Caruso 1963:176). Eventually, the Mississippi Company would ship some 1900

African slaves to Louisiane, with an additional 3600 shipped to Louisiane during the decade of the 1720s to replace the European emigres who had died (Hall 1992:35).

Like all "pyramid schemes," Law's financial programs benefitted a few early investors, who quickly cashed in their bank notes or sold them to others. Those lucky few who cashed in their notes for hard currency quickly moved their money out of France. With little hard currency to back his bank notes, and the public beginning to clamor for its money, Law issued decrees devaluating money, bank notes, and shares in the Mississippi Company. This resulted in a financial panic and run on the national bank. Law was dismissed in disgrace, the French economy was ruined, and the colony of Louisiana was now viewed as a waste land (Caruso 1963:182-4).

In retrospect, the one great success of John Law's Company was the creation of a viable colony in Louisiana. The colony finally had sufficient European and African labor to produce agricultural surpluses that were exported to French Caribbean colonies to feed their plantation slaves. In particular, African slaves from Senegal brought their knowledge of rice cultivation to Louisiana, which became an important food staple of that colony and a major export (Hall 1992:59).

In addition, the French colonial government in Louisiana now possessed the manpower to construct forts and settlements to hold the colony against English incursions. In the next few years a fort and a relatively large settlement were established on the left bank of the Yazoo River on and below the bluffs. As with all forts erected in Louisiane at this time, such as Fort Toulouse (designated an NHL in 1960) among the Alabamas and Fort Rosalie among the Natchez, the one built along the Yazoo River was erected not so much as a defense against the local Indians, but for purposes of trade (Thomas 1989:12). The establishment was called Fort St. Pierre by all but Dumont dit Montigny, who consistently referred to it as Fort St. Claude. Mulvihill (1931:18) believed it was erected in 1719 by Colonel Bigart, but according to Pénicaut (who must be regarded with some caution), Bienville sent Lieutenant Boulaye and 30 men to establish the installation in 1718:

> At this same time M. de Bienville sent M. de la Boulaye, lieutenant, with thirty men, many munitions, and much merchandise to establish a fort near the village of the Yazoo. When he arrived there he selected one of the most elevated situations which he could find on the borders of their river, four leagues distant from its mouth on the right, two gunshots distant from their village where he had his fort built [Pénicaut in Swanton 1911:333; see also French 1869:142].

In the year that the fort was erected, M. de la Houssaye and M. de Scovion obtained concessions along the Yazoo River and settled them with 82 people. In December of 1720, two French ships - L'Éléphant and le Dromedaire - arrived at Ship Island with 250 people destined for the Yazoo Colony. The company included the officers M. M. Dillon, Fabre, Duplessis, Leviller, Le Suze, and La Combe (Gayarré 1846:178-179; Mulvihill 1931:18). In this same year M. Desliette, stationed in the Illinois country, received orders to go to the Yazoo Post with 15 men to prepare the area for the arrival of the concessionaires' personnel (Giraud 1966:370-371). The Company of the Indies had a warehouse at this post, but the fort and most of the territory belonged to a private company consisting of M. le Blanc, M. le

Comte de Belle-Isle, M. le Marquis d'Arsfeld, and M. le Blond de la Tour (Charlevoix 1923:234-235). According to Wilson (1965:112; 118), the grant belonged to M. d'Asfeld and M. le Blanc, with M. le Blond de la Tour as director.

In January of 1721, the ships La Gironde and La Volage arrived at Ship Island with about 300 persons intended for the Yazoo concessions of M. le Blanc and Count Belleville. A month later another ship arrived carrying 375 Swiss troops to be distributed among the various posts, including the Yazoo (French 1869:157-158).

Although considerable numbers of people were slated for the Yazoo Post, many probably died upon landing in the country, a feature typical of Law's other grants (Delanglez 1937:36; Le Conte 1924; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 67:259). According to Dawson Phelps, of the 172 men, 33 women, and 35 children who sailed from Lorient, France, on the ship L'Éléphant in 1720, most perished on the beaches of New Biloxi. Others returned to France, with only about 60 of the total arriving at the Yazoo Post (Phelps 1966:46). However, in comparison with other French frontier settlements, the Yazoo was quite large. Forty-eight soldiers were in residence in 1721, over twice as many as were at the Natchez Post at the same time (Chartrand 1973:60). M. le Blanc's concession, which was operated by M. le Blond de la Tour and 60 men (Swanton 1911:333), was situated four leagues from the mouth of the Yazoo River, adjacent to Fort St. Pierre. Le Page du Pratz described the concession as follows:

> The grant of M. le Blanc, Minister, or Secretary at War, was settled there, four leagues from the Mississippi, as you go up this little river. There a fort stands, with a company of men, commanded by a Captain. This company, together with the servants, were in the pay of their Minister [Le Page du Pratz 1774:56].

The fort itself appears to have been quite a formidable structure. When it was originally constructed it may not have been terribly impressive, but there is strong historical evidence that it was improved upon in the next few years. Dumont dit Montigny was commissioned to draw the plan of the fort in 1722 and it seems that he also engineered some changes in its actual layout (Delanglez 1937:37-38). Diron d'Artaguiette, who visited the area in February of 1723, was very impressed with his short stay there:

> We stayed at Fort St. Pierre des Yazous, which is on a bluff. The plan of the Fort is square, having four bastions surrounded by a little moat about six feet wide and three feet deep. The commandant, who is M. Degrave, had his house in the fort, as do also the officers and the soldiers, who form two companies. It is at this fort where I have seen the best disciplined troops and where the duty is performed with exactitude, thanks to the attention of the commandant. These two companies are to go to the Natchez, as I have already said [Diron d'Artaguiette 1722-1723 in Mereness 1916:51].

These two companies were replaced by Bernaval's Company at the time of Diron d'Artaguiette's visit. One receives quite a different and far from complimentary impression from Father Poisson who attended the Yazoo Post in 1727:

> On the 23rd, we arrived at the Yatous (Yazoo); this is a French post two leagues from the mouth of the river bearing this name, which flows into the Mississippi; there is an Officer with the title of commandant, a dozen soldiers, and three or four planters. Here was Monsieur le Blanc's concession, which had come to ruin like many others. The ground is rolling; it has been slightly explored, and the air is said to be unhealthy. The Commandant ordered all the artillery of the

> fort to be fired; this consisted of two very small guns. This fort in which the Commandant lives, is a shed surrounded by a palisade, but well defended by the situation of the place [Poisson 1727 in Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 67:314-317].

It appears that the colony deteriorated severely in the space of but four years. The reason may in part have been related to the unhealthy conditions of the Yazoo environment (Bénard de la Harpe 1831:310). The region was originally noted for its agricultural fertility and its potential for establishing lucrative concessions (Giraud 1966:170-171; Le Page du Pratz 1774:57), but Dumont dit Montigny noted in his 1722 visit that half the garrison was dead, the air or water apparently having disagreed with them (Delanglez 1937:37). A year earlier the commandant considered moving the fort a league upriver where the air was thought to be healthier, but he died before putting this operation into effect. According to Father Charlevoix:

> Its waters are of a reddish colour, and are said to affect those who drink them with the bloody flux. The air is, besides, extremely unwholesome. I had three leagues to travel before I reached the fort, which I found all in mourning, on account of the death of Mons. Bizart, its governor. He had built the fort in a bad situation, and, before he died, had thought of removing it a league farther off, to a fine meadow, where the air was more wholesome, and where there was a village of the Yasous, mixed with the Couroas and Ofogoulas [Charlevoix 1923:233-234].

Diron d'Artaguiette confirmed the reports on the unhealthy conditions at the Yazoo Post in 1723:

> Two hours before day there arrived from the Yazous a boat manned with ten soldiers in charge of a sergeant, which is carrying a half score of workmen for Terre Blanche. These people are from the concession of M. Le Blanc. They are abandoning the post of the Yazous because of the sickness there, and the company of Bernaval will go to the fort of the Yazous [Diron d'Artaguiette 1722-1723 in Mereness 1916:49].

Other recently formed French settlements were also having severe troubles with disease (Mereness 1916:41), which suggests that it was not the Yazoo environment itself which was responsible for the pestilence, but rather the inability of the European colonists to cope with the radical change in physical environment they encountered in the southeast. The inhabitants of the Yazoo Post were also affected by famine in the summer of 1722 (Delanglez 1937:38) and a terrible drought plagued the area the following summer (Swanton 1911:178). These natural calamities no doubt contributed to the decimation of the colony.

Another reason for the failure of the post was the financial disaster suffered by John Law, an event which resulted in the collapse of his entire colonial enterprise and the near financial bankruptcy of France. As referred to above, M. le Blanc, the leading concession holder along the Yazoo, abandoned the region in 1723, consolidating his interests in the Terre Blanche concession at Natchez (Swanton 1911:333). The withdrawal of the principal grantee no doubt severely affected the development of the Yazoo colony.

The troubles between the French and the Chickasaw in the 1720's (Crane 1929:273; Mereness 1916:51) also affected the residents of the Yazoo Bluffs region:

> This post was very advantageously situated, as well as for the goodness of the air as the quality of the soil, like to that of the Natchez, as for the landing-place, which was very commodious,

> and for the commerce with the natives, if our people but knew how to gain and preserve their friendship. But the neighborhood of the Chickasaw, ever fast friends of the English, almost cut off any hopes of succeeding. This post was on these accounts threatened with utter ruin, sooner or later; as actually happened in 1722, by means of those wretched Chickasaws; who came in the night and murdered the people in the settlements that were made by two sergeants out of the fort. But a boy who was scalped by them was cured, and escaped with life [Le Page du Pratz 1774:56].

Charlevoix concurred with the bothersome Indian problem:

> They certainly could have chosen better lands in a better place. True, it is important to secure this river, the source of which is not far from [the English in] Carolina. But it would have been enough to have a good garrison to hold in check the Yazoos who are allies of the Chickasaws. To be obliged to be always on guard against the Savages, who are the neighbors of the English, is not the way to settle firmly a concession [Charlevoix in Delanglez 1935:448; see also Charlevoix 1923:235].

M. de Grave, commandant of the fort after Bigart's death, made peace with the Chickasaw shortly after the above events (Mereness 1916:33), but Chickasaw troubles in other parts of Louisiana continued. As mentioned earlier, the Choctaw did much to weaken the power of the Chickasaw. The latter sued for peace in 1723 when two Chickasaw chiefs appeared at the Yazoo Post. They were sent to New Orleans to confer with Bienville (Mereness 1916:87). Because of the Indian problems, the provincial administration debated in 1724, after peace had been made, whether or not to evacuate the Yazoo Post (Rowland and Sanders 1929:411). They decided not to do so, but they did reduce the garrison. In 1726, a year before Father Poisson's visit, the garrison consisted of only 15 soldiers (Gayarré 1846:227; Giraud 1991:381).

Indians and French Settlers During the "Trader" Period

The type of relationship which existed between the French and the local Indians can only be speculated upon. Too little attention was paid to these small groups. The 1729 massacre destroyed all documentation of what Father Souel had done in his mission (Delanglez 1935:385). The earliest mention of the Indian villages, with respect to the Yazoo Post, is Pénicaut's description in 1718 of the fort being situated two gunshots distance from the Yazoo (French 1869:142; Swanton 1911:333). Three years later Father Charlevoix described a mixed Yazoo, Koroa, and Ofo village of about 200 men about a league from the fort (Charlevoix 1923:233-234; Delanglez 1935:448). Bénard de la Harpe, who visited the post in 1722, was more definite in the location of these Indians:

> Yazoo, Koroa, Ofo, and Onspee nations; their houses are scattered by districts (and) most are situated on mounds of earth between little valleys, made by hand, so that it is presumed that formerly these nations were more numerous. Today they are reduced to about 250 persons [Bénard de la Harpe, Peabody Museum, LMS Files, Harvard University].

The directions given by la Harpe and Charlevoix would place the above groups [redacted] presumably their principal village during the fort's occupation. Diron d'Artaguiette, who examined the post a year after M. de la Harpe, estimated a population of 200 warriors:

> [redacted] Indian villages, which hardly make one. They are the Yazous, the Aufaugoulas, and the Couroyes. The last are going to establish themselves on the Rivière des Ouatchitas. These nations number in all perhaps 200 warriors, who form a sort of little republic, living without recognizing any chiefs [Diron d'Artaguiette 1722-1723 in Mereness 1916:51].

Four years later, Father Poisson referred to the Indian groups in his short stay at the fort, but did little more than confirm the earlier locational information:

> During our stay at Yatous, he (Father Souel) bought a house - or rather, a cabin built in the French fashion - while waiting until he could make his arrangements to settle among the Savages, [redacted] There are three villages, in which three different languages are spoken; their inhabitants compose a small tribe; I know nothing more of them [Poisson 1727 in Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 67:314-317].

The relationship between the French and the local aboriginal groups appears to have been essentially peaceful throughout most of Fort St. Pierre's occupation. The Yazoo even aided the French in the Third Natchez War (Swanton 1911:211). However, as indicated by Father Charlevoix, the settlers were wary of their allegiance:

> The French live on pretty good terms with them, but they have not too much confidence in them on account of the relations which the Yazoos, above all, have always had with the English [Charlevoix in Delanglez 1935:448; see also Charlevoix 1923:233-234].

It seems that the Indians were not content with their French neighbors either, as there is some suggestion they planned to leave the region:

> It was from M. Petit Livilliers that (we learned) that M. Degrave had gone to New Orleans without orders. That since the departure of M. Degrave he had engaged the Aufaugolas, Couroye, and Yazous to remain there. They had intended to go and settle on the Rivière des Wachitas. That he had engaged the Tapoucha Indians to come and settle near the fort. This is a small Indian nation, which lived forty leagues up this river. They were going to come in the autumn [Diron d'Artaguiette 1722-1723 in Mereness 1916:87].

It is probable that French-Indian relations improved somewhat with the arrival of Father Souel in 1727. French interest in both the Yazoo and Arkansas areas was largely a product of strategic position. The purpose in manning these areas with Frenchmen was to contain the English by allying local Indians to French interests. The Company of the Indies was well aware that the best way to maintain Indian allegiance was to send them missionaries, even more so than arming them (Delanglez 1935:449). Two chaplains, M. M. John Claude Juif and Nicholas Darquevaux, accompanied the Le Blanc workmen to the Yazoo Post. The former arrived in Louisiana in 1720 and was still in residence at Le Blanc's concession in 1723. Father Darquevaux died in August of 1722 (Charlevoix 1923:260; Delanglez 1935:448; Swanton 1911:178).

It is evident that these priests only served the European population, much like Father Philibert at the Natchez colony (Swanton 1911:207; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 67:310-311), because the Company of the Indies decided in 1724 that the Yazoo Post should have a missionary as well as a chaplain (Delanglez 1935:112). The Jesuits had been paid by the king since 1723 for having a missionary in this location, but there is no evidence that one was actually there. The Jesuit Father Souel arrived in 1727, at the same time as Father Poisson's visit (Giraud 1991:381-382). Although Souel spent some time in New Orleans away from his mission between the fall of 1728 and the spring of 1729 (Delanglez 1935:195, 451), there are indications that he had made some headway with the local Indians in the two years of his tenure.

Historical Background the Natchez Drama

When La Salle first contacted the Natchez, in 1682, on his expedition to the mouth of the Mississippi River, the chief of the Natchez resided in the Grand Village (designated an NHL in 1964) and controlled some nine other ceremonial mound centers. The Natchez chiefdom was one of the few ceremonial mound building societies to make the transition from the prehistoric to historic period with its culture reasonably intact.

French writers of the early eighteenth century describe a Natchez society whose chiefdom could marshall thousands of armed warriors, demand human sacrifice for elaborate burials of the Natchez elite, and resist European encroachment on its lands. The encounters between the French and the Natchez and disputes over land eventually led to a series of wars that ultimately destroyed the Grand Village and all of the Loess Hills ceremonial centers of the Natchez.

The transitional phases between the late prehistoric Emerald Phase, of the Plaquemine Culture, and the early historic Natchez covered the time period when the Lower Mississippi Valley underwent a dramatic decrease in population, perhaps brought on by the introduction of European diseases in the sixteenth-century. One of the regions affected the most was the Yazoo Basin, which was left almost entirely uninhabited.

Although the Natchez Indians also suffered a considerable population loss, they were able to make up for their demographic losses by the incorporation of refugee Mississippian groups from the north, according to French accounts of the early eighteenth- century. The ability of the Natchez to deal on an equal basis with the French can only be accounted for by the strength of control that the Natchez elite held over the people.

Due to the extensive nature of the French accounts, it is possible to characterize the period between 1682 and 1700 as a period of limited contact between the Natchez and the French. Sporadic encounters with European explorers and traders first made note of the settled and, by European standards, "civilized" nature of the Natchez society.

After 1700, cultural encounters became more intense as French missionaries attempted to convert the Native Americans of the Lower Mississippi River Valley, with little success. With the establishment of a French trading post, in 1714, and Fort Rosalie, in 1716, on the Natchez Bluffs, only three miles from the Grand Village, contact accelerated between the Europeans

and the Natchez. Two small wars broke out in 1714 and 1722 over property disputes between French settlers and the Natchez.

After the Chief of the Natchez, the Great Sun, granted certain land concessions to the French in 1722, peace was restored. The Great Sun chief and his brother (the Tattooed Serpent), the Natchez war chief, resided in the Grand Village, a ceremonial mound complex with residences for the Natchez elite and the main temple of the Natchez tribe. From the Grand Village the Great Sun controlled the nine surrounding Natchez mound complexes and associated villages.

French accounts illustrate the respect the Europeans had for the Natchez chiefs, and the manner in which they were able to control their subjects, which they contrasted with other Native American groups whose chiefs could not exercise the control enjoyed by the Natchez elite. What the French did not realize was that they were witnessing the last remaining mound building chiefdom to survive in the United States. Between A.D. 900 and 1500 mound building chiefdoms had spread across most of the eastern United States. The French accounts left to us of the Natchez provide archeologists and anthropologists with invaluable, first-hand information on the nature of these prehistoric societies and how they may have functioned.

In 1725 and 1728, the Tattooed Serpent and the Great Sun died, respectively. Their elaborate burial ceremonies chronicled by the Europeans showed that when the Great Sun died, his residence on the top of the earthen Mound B at the Grand Village of the Natchez was demolished or burned; the mound dimensions were increased; and a new structure was built on the new mound top to house the new Great Sun. In the case of the death of an important noble, such as the War Chief, who lived in a large residence on the plaza, his house was also destroyed and rebuilt on a larger scale for his successor.

With the passing of the Great Sun, his successor, the Young Sun came to power in 1728. This individual was more hostile to the French encroachment on Natchez territory then his predecessors, and apparently was part of a conspiracy on the part of the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Natchez to attack Fort Rosalie and drive the French from the Natchez Bluffs. For some reason this Indian alliance did not materialize, but the Young Sun led the Natchez against Fort Rosalie on November 28, 1729. Most of the French soldiers and settlers were killed in this surprise attack.

Within a few months the French had established military alliances with the Choctaws and the Tunicas and returned to the Natchez Bluffs. The French and their Indian allies launched a siege against the Natchez in the Grand Village, forcing them to abandon their ceremonial mound center, for a hastily prepared palisade fort. By early 1730, the Natchez were defeated. All Natchez captives were brought to New Orleans and sold as slaves to the French sugar planters in Santo Domingo, while the few remaining Natchez refugees joined the Chickasaws, and later, the Creeks and Cherokees. The Natchez society and its people disappeared as a cultural group within ten years of their defeat.

Indian Uprising - The Destruction of Fort St. Pierre

Several Yazoo Indians accompanied M. du Codère, the commandant of Fort St. Pierre, to the Natchez Post when the Natchez Massacre occurred, now often referred to as the Natchez

Drama (Giraud 1991:388-439). Although witness to the events, the Yazoo apparently did not participate in them. One Frenchman managed to elude the Natchez, yet ended up amidst the Yazoo when he entered a French house:

> He was agreeably surprised when he found these Savages eager to render him a service, to heap kindnesses upon him, to commiserate him, to console him, to furnish him with provisions, clothes, and a boat to make his escape to New Orleans. These were the Yazous, who were returning from chanting the calumet at Oumas. The Chief charged him to say to Monsieur Perrier, that he had nothing to fear on the part of the Yazous, 'that they would not lose their sense,' that is, that they would always remain attached to the French, and that he would be constantly on the watch with his tribe to warn the French pirogues that were descending the river to be on their guard against the Natchez (Le Petit 1730 in Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:170-173; see also Rowland and Sanders 1927:66-67 and Swanton 1911:227).

These Indians failed to keep their word to Governor Perier, because in December of the same year the French inhabitants of the Yazoo Post were killed. The attack commenced with their missionary, as related by Father Le Petit:

> On December 11, Father Souel was returning towards evening from having paid a visit to the Chief, and while in a ravine was shot at several times, and fell dead on the spot. The Savages immediately rushed to his cabin to plunder it. His Negro, his only companion and protection, armed himself with a woodcutter's knife to prevent the plunder, and even wounded a savage. He paid for this zealous action with his life. Fortunately, he had been baptized only a few months before, and was living a very Christian life.
>
> These Savages, who until that time had seemed to appreciate the affection the missionary bore them, reproached themselves for his death as soon as they were capable of reflection; but returning to their natural ferocity, they resolved to complete their crime by destroying the French post: "Since the black Chief is dead," they exclaimed, "it is as if all the French were dead; let us not spare any" [Le Petit in Delanglez 1935:252-253; see also Claiborne 1880:44; Swanton 1911:230; and Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:172-175].

It is probable that the murder of Father Souel and the attack on the fort were a bit more organized than suggested above by Le Petit. Father Charlevoix recorded the events as follows:

> On the 11th of December, the Jesuit Father Souel, who was missionary to the Yazoos, then mingled in the same village with the Corrois and Offogoulas, when returning in the evening from visiting the chief of the Yazoos, receiving several musket-shots as he was crossing a river, and expired on the spot. His murderers at once ran to his cabin to plunder it.
>
> Early the next morning they proceeded to the fort, which was only a league from their village. On seeing them approach it was supposed that they were coming to chant the calumet to the Chevalier des Roches, who commanded in the absence of du Codère; for although it is only forty leagues by water and fifteen by land from the Natchez to the Yazoos, no information had reached the latter post of what had occurred nearly a fortnight before in the former. The Indians were accordingly allowed to enter the fort, and when it was least expected, they rushed on the French, who were only seventeen in all; they had not even time to attempt to defend themselves, and not one escaped. These savages spared the lives only of four women and five children, whom they made slaves [Charlevoix 1923:85].

There is some question as to the actual date of the attack and the number of people involved. Both Le Petit (1730 in Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:172) and Charlevoix concurred on the

date of December 11, 1729 for the death of Father Souel, and Charlevoix added that 17 people were in the fort at the time of the attack (Giraud 1991:400). There were, thus, 19 colonists (including Souel and his Negro slave) in the area at this time. In addition to M. du Codère, two other Frenchmen (M. Soupar and M. Bompugnon) were killed in the Natchez uprising (Rowland and Sanders 1927:125). This would bring the overall population of the Yazoo Post to 22 in 1729, but it may have been somewhat larger. Father Le Petit recorded 17 men killed, with four children and five women spared; M. de Lusser reported the death of 15 men with five women and four children taken prisoner; while Dumont dit Montigny recorded as many as 20 men killed (Delanglez 1935:254). However, none of the above historians witnessed the event, their information being received directly or indirectly from the wife of M. Aubry who was captured by the Yazoo and Koroa. She was rescued by the Choctaw and reported her account to M. de Lusser who was among these Indians in January of 1730:

> I inquired of her at what time the Yazoos had attacked the French. She told me that it was a week before Christmas, that the Reverend Father Souel with his little negro had been killed the day before which was a Sunday, the day on which the chiefs of the Yazoos had returned from the Natchez, that on Monday morning as she was embarking and was for that purpose at the water's edge the Indians came and killed her husband who began to shout with all his might, but that he was stunned by a tomahawk blow, and that at once they went to the fort with a calumet, and that their tomahawks hidden under their robes they had laid violent hands on all the French who were fifteen in number, having spared only five women and four children. The fact that the Koroa women had lamented the death of the latter was what saved their lives. (She said) that they had dragged Chevalier de Roche, the commandant of the post, from his bed to cut him to pieces [M. de Lusser 1730 in Rowland and Sanders 1927:99].

The Choctaw reported that Father Souel escaped the massacre with several Frenchmen (Rowland and Sanders 1927:87), but they were obviously confusing him with Father Doutreleau. This last mentioned Jesuit missionary and his escorts were attacked at the mouth of the Yazoo River by either the Ofo or Yazoo Indians. He escaped, unbelievably, with but a slight arm wound and a mouth full of bird shot (Delanglez 1935:255-256; Giraud 1991:399; Rowland and Sanders 1927:100; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:174-183). There is no record of any other men surviving the attack. Three of the five French women, the wives of Aubry, Blondin, and St. Denis, were "saved" by a combined Choctaw-Chakchiuma attack on the Yazoo and Koroa. This occurred three weeks after the destruction of the Yazoo Post when the latter groups were taking their prisoners to the Chakchiumas and from there on to the Chickasaw to sell to the British. Three children, one of whom belonged to Mdm. Aubry, were also saved and turned over to the French, but not until their rescuers were handsomely paid. The less fortunate prisoners ran with the Yazoo when the Choctaw and Chakchiuma attacked, not knowing who their real enemies were. What happened to them is unknown (Delanglez 1935:254-255; Rowland and Sanders 1927:96-102, 110; Swanton 1911:233,331).

The Choctaw and Chakchiuma apparently profited quite well from their rescue mission. M. de Lusser observed a Choctaw dance soon after the above event and noted that all but the dance leader were adorned with the clothes of the French which had been stolen from the Yazoo. Included with this booty were most of Father Souel's religious paraphernalia:

> The Indian who was leading (the dance) had a paten hanging about his neck, a ciborium at his side, this one with a maniple on his arm and all the others were adorned with the clothes of the French they had won at the defeat of the Yazoo.[1] The Reverend Father Baudouin recovered all the sacred vessels in exchange for some goods that were given them as presents. Having learned that the chalice of Reverend Father Souel was at the Chakiumas, he told me to please speak in order to recover it. This I did, and they promised to bring it back to me, when they brought back the prisoners . . . That evening when we were about to go to bed, the chief told the Reverend Father Baudouin that he had a coat like his, and at once he went and got a front cloth of a funeral altar, which the Reverend Father Baudouin obtained by trading [M. de Lusser in Delanglez 1935:254-255].

The Indians of the Yazoo Bluffs region had apparently secured a great deal of merchandise in their attack on the French settlement. It was noted that some Arkansas Indians visited Father Souel's hut after the massacre and observed a bell and some books which had been left behind (Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:216), but, as indicated above, the missionary's possessions seem to have otherwise had great appeal to the Indians:

> One of the Yazoos, having stripped the missionary, clothed himself with his garments, and soon went to announce to the Natchez, that his nation had kept their word, and that the French settled among them were all massacred [Le Petit 1730 in Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:174].

This reference to the Natchez Indians suggests that the events in the Yazoo Bluffs region were directly related to the activities to the south. Prior to December of 1729, the French and Indians along the Yazoo seem to have gotten along tolerably well. It was noted above by Charlevoix that the local Indians were allowed, quite trustingly, to enter Fort St. Pierre. Le Page du Pratz illustrated this trust also when he related that the Yazoo Indians went into the fort under the pretext of "paying (them) a visit, as usual" (Le Page du Pratz 1774:83). According to Le Page, the Natchez gave presents to the Yazoo and encouraged them to "follow the example that had been set" when they returned to their homes (Swanton 1911:229). In describing the escape of Father Doutreleau and his escorts from the Yazoo Bluffs region, Father Le Petit shed light on this "example":

> (It had been) their intention to stop in passing at the Natchez, but having seen that the houses of the French were either demolished or burned, they did not think it advisable to listen to the compliments of the savages who from the bank of the river invited them to land [Le Petit 1730 in Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:180-181].

Le Page du Pratz also referred to the widespread use of burning in the Natchez uprising:

> After they [the Natchez] had cleared the fort, warehouse, and other houses, the Natchez set them all on fire, not leaving a single building standing [Le Page du Pratz 1774:83].

Although the Natchez Indians were undoubtedly instrumental in convincing the Yazoo to rid themselves of their French neighbors, it is obvious that other groups, especially the Chickasaw, were in part responsible for the events. Some Chickasaw warriors even participated in the destruction of the Yazoo Post, as one brought a French scalp to his chief

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[1] A paten is a metal plate or disk used for holding the bread in the Eucharist; a ciborium is a covered cup for holding the consecrated wafers of the Eucharist; and a maniple is a silk band worn hanging over the left forearm as a Eucharist vestment.

immediately after the event. Further implication of their involvement was the Yazoo and Koroa having been attacked by a combined Choctaw-Chakchiuma war party as they were taking their prisoners to the Chickasaw. English traders, who had two warehouses full of European merchandise, were among the Chickasaw at this time. They no doubt supported, if not instigated, the rebellions to the south (Rowland and Sanders 1927:85-87). Governor Périer felt the English were solely responsible for the atrocities and was even convinced they had seduced the Choctaw into revolting (M. Périer 1730 in Rowland and Sanders 1927:63-69).

The French were fortunate that the Choctaw did not become a part of the uprising. The reasons why they failed to join will probably never be known. There is some suggestion they were obviously involved in the original plans, but a premature eruption of the Natchez revolt essentially excluded the Choctaw from any benefits. Jealousy and failure on their own part perhaps resulted in them joining with the French in punishing the groups responsible for the atrocities. Whether this was actually the case is not known, but it is recognized that the French were not overly sure of the loyalty of the Choctaw in the punishment campaigns waged against the Natchez in the early 1730s (Giraud 1991:416-427; Swanton 1911:232-235).

The Natchez Drama and the destruction of Fort St. Pierre wiped out the Mississippi Company's ambitious plans for establishing agricultural settlements in the upper Mississippi River Delta area by killing one-tenth of the French population of Louisiana. However, the local Native Americans were aided not only by English traders, but also enslaved Africans recently introduced into the colony by the Company. Recent research by Gwendolyn M. Hall in her book *Africans in Colonial Louisiana, The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (1992), provides ample documentation that numerous Africans were running away from French plantations almost from their arrival in the colony and joining Native American groups (Hall 1992:97-99). African slaves participated in the destruction of Fort Rosalie with the Natchez, and were living among the Choctaw after the defeat of the Natchez by the French (1992:116-118).

The Yazoo bluffs region groups suffered greatly from their role in the destruction of the French colony. Small as they were, they fell easily under the weight of the Choctaw. The Arkansas also participated in reducing the manpower of the Yazoo and Koroa in the years following 1729 (Rowland et al. 1984:210, 212). The remainder of these Indians probably joined up with the Chickasaw (Swanton 1911:242-243,332). The Ofo apparently escaped retribution, as they were adopted for awhile by the Tunica and later maintained some autonomy by residing in a small village in the Natchez region.

The Indigenous Populations of the Yazoo Bluffs Region

Several Indian groups [redacted] 18th century. Included were the Tunica, Yazoo, Koroa, Ofo, Tioux, and Chakchiuma. The first record of people along this tributary was made by M. de la Salle in 1682. He did not visit the region, but noted the existence of "Tourika", "Jason", and "Kouera" (Cox 1905:164). M. Tonti, a member of the La Salle expedition, listed the "Ionica", "Yazon", "Coroa", and "Chonque" (Cox 1905:64). The Englishman Daniel Coxe also did not visit the Yazoo River groups, but he did obtain some information on their whereabouts. He gave their order of location on the "Yasque" River as follows: "Yassouees", "Tonicas", "Kourouas", "Thiou",

"Samboukia", and "Epitoupa" (Coxe 1940:24). In 1699 M. d'Iberville, a contemporary of Daniel Coxe, was informed by a Taënsa Indian that the "Tonicas", "Ouispe", "Opocoulas", "Taposa", "Chaquesauma", "Outapa", and "Thysia" lived on the Yazoo River (Swanton 1911:10). He estimated a total of 400 men for the first three groups (Delanglez 1935:447).

The first recorded French contact occurred in 1698 when the Jesuit missionaries François-Jolliet de Montigny, Thaumar de la Source, and Antoine Davion ascended the Yazoo River in search of converts. The Superior of the Priests of the Foreign Missions, on information received from either De Montigny or La Source, reported the presence of "Tunicas", "Yazoos", "Courouars", "Houspé", and "Tioux". The first four groups, which resided in three villages (the Koroa and Yazoo were combined), were estimated as having 300 people (Delanglez 1935:446-447). Father de Montigny himself estimated a combined total of 2,000 people in the region (Shea 1861:76).

André Pénicaut, who visited the area in the spring of 1700, observed six Indian groups, including the "Tonicas", "Yasous", "Coroas", "Offogoulas", "Bitoupas", and "Oussipes" (French 1869:61). Several months later the Jesuit Father Gravier visited Father Davion's mission among the Tunica and, with information received from the latter, reported the presence of the "Toumika", "Jakou", and "Ounspik" (Delanglez 1935:446-447; Shea 1861:133; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 65:129-130). Curiously, he made no mention of the Koroa. The Tunica left the region several years after Gravier's visit, but his is the only reference to the Koroa having left the area for any extended period.

The next person to describe the groups along the Yazoo River was Father Charlevoix in 1721. He recorded the presence of "Yasous", "Couroas", and "Ofogoulas" in a mixed village with a combined total of 200 men at the most (Charlevoix 1923:233-234; Delanglez 1935:448; Swanton 1911:11). A year later Bénard de la Harpe reported a total population of about 250 for the "Yasons", "Courois", "Offogoulas", and "Onspee" (Delanglez 1935:446-447). Father Le Petit reported that the Yazoo and Koroa numbered only 40 warriors by 1730 (Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:221). Le Page du Pratz reported five groups as having lived along the river. He included the "Yazous", "Coroas", "Chacchi-Oumas", "Ouse-Ogoulas", and "Tapoussas". The first two groups could pronounce the phoneme "r", whereas the others (like the Natchez) could not (Le Page du Pratz 1774:299-300).

It was on the basis of the "r" phoneme that John R. Swanton included the Tunica, Yazoo, and Koroa in the Tunican linguistic group. This, of course, is little to base linguistic uniformity on, especially when there appears to have been considerable language diversity. The Superior of the Foreign Missions reported three languages, one spoken by the "Tunicas" and "Tioux", one by the "Yazoos" and "Courouars", and the last by the "Houspé" (Delanglez 1935:446). Gravier also noted that the groups he observed spoke three different languages and that Father Davion devoted himself to the Tunica language, to the exclusion of the others, because the Tunica were the largest (Shea 1861:133). There are a number of factors which could have been responsible for the noted linguistic diversity, the principal one no doubt being that these small groups were mere remnants of large prehistoric populations scattered throughout the Yazoo Basin. Brain (1988:21-30) has argued quite convincingly that the Tunica were located in the northern part of the Basin at the time of the DeSoto Entrada, migrating down to the Yazoo Bluffs region in the period between Spanish and French explorations. This could

account for linguistic differences with the Yazoo Indians, as the ancestral roots of the latter are believed to have stretched far back into prehistory in the Yazoo Bluffs region.

Tunica

The Tunica were the most populous of the groups which inhabited the lower reaches of the Yazoo River at the turn of the 18th century. It was because of this that the French missionaries concentrated their attention on the Tunica. Consequently, more is known about them than about any of the other aboriginal groups in the region. Father Jacques Marquette was the first to refer to the Tunica when, in 1673, he called them the "Tanikwa" (Shea 1861:80). In the Tunican language this word means "men" or "people". According to Swanton (1911:306), they referred to themselves as the "Yoron".

It is probable that the Tunica made initial contact with Europeans at a much earlier date. They were possibly the "Tanico" that DeSoto met in northeast Louisiana or southeast Arkansas. Choctaw and Chickasaw tradition identified "Tunica Oldfields" as being near the above areas, which lends credence to this hypothesis (Swanton 1911:306). It has been argued that the first village of Quizquiz, visited by DeSoto in 1541 (Bourne 1904:25), may have been the sixteenth-century home of the Tunica (Brain 1988:21-25; Brain et al. 1974:255-262). On Marquette's 1676 map the Tunica were plotted west of the Methegamea and Arkansas Rivers, along with the "Akoroa" and several other tribes. Shortly thereafter, Joutel was told of two Tunica settlements in northeast Louisiana (Swanton 1911:307). In subsequent years they were associated with the left bank of the Yazoo River until they left the region in 1706. Although the Tunica were not in the Yazoo Bluffs region when Fort St. Peter was occupied, they played an extremely important role in the history of French-Indian interaction in this part of the Lower Mississippi Valley.

Yazoo

M. Tonty, in 1682, referred to the river occupied by the "Ionica", "Yazou", and "Coroa" as the "river of the Yazou", even though the Tunica were much more numerous (Cox 1905:64). Swanton felt that naming the river as such is related to Tonty's statement that the Yazoo are masters of the soil, and is perhaps indicative of this group's long domain in the area (Swanton 1911:332-334). The idea is interesting, but the evidence is slim. The activities of the Yazoo Indians during the "missionary period" are, for the most part, unknown. They apparently resided with a Koroa population at the time of first contact (Delanglez 1935:446), and there is some evidence to suggest that this mixture continued in later years. As a result of their probable involvement in the murder of the missionary Father Foucault, their relationship with the French was considerably strained in the first decade of the 18th century. Through time, their sentiments laid essentially in the direction of the Chickasaws and the English (Swanton 1911:332-334).

Koroa

The Koroa have had a very complex history (Kidder 1988). Clearly there were a number of different Koroa branches as they were encountered in quite a few widely-dispersed places in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. La Salle met them below the Natchez

while Tonty, and later d'Iberville, signified they were situated farther to the north upon the west bank of the Mississippi River. Swanton believed that one branch, different from the one met by La Salle, occupied the territory along the Mississippi River near the mouth of the Yazoo.

As a result of their role in the murder of Father Foucault, the Koroa were attacked by the Illinois and Arkansas in 1704. It may have been at this time that the Koroa repositioned themselves further up the Yazoo River to be closer to their pro-British allies, the Yazoo and Chickasaws (Swanton 1911:327-332). However, in almost all the early descriptions of the Yazoo Bluffs region, there appears to have been one branch which remained in close association with the Yazoo Indians. It is probable that the Yazoo-Koroa relationship had deep prehistoric roots.

Ofo

The Ofo was the smallest group in the Yazoo Bluffs region and, consequently, was of little concern to the early French adventurers. Few agreed on the way their name was to be pronounced. The term "Ushpie" was the Tunica (and seemingly the Yazoo and Koroa also) name for the Ofo. Swanton believed that the terms "Ofogoula", "Ouispe", "Opocoulas", "Oussipés", and "Ounspik" all refer to the Ofo (Swanton 1911:34; Swanton and Dorsey 1912:10-12). Le Page du Pratz referred to them as the "Ouse-Ogoulas" and erroneously interpreted their name to mean "Nation of the Dog" (Le Page du Pratz 1774:300; Swanton and Dorsey 1912:10-11).

The Ofo, Quapaw (Arkansas), and Biloxi were all members of the Siouan linguistic stock (Swanton 1911:7-8). Swanton hypothesized that they migrated from the upper Ohio River in the early contact period (Swanton 1946:31). Like their close neighbors, the Ofo generally seem to have had pro-British inclinations. But unlike the Yazoo and Koroa, the Ofo did not participate in the destruction of Fort St. Pierre in 1729. Their restraint has been interpreted as loyalty to the French (Swanton 1911:230; Swanton and Dorsey 1912:11; Thwaites 1896-1901, Vol. 68:172-173), but according to a survivor, their absence appears to have been more related to them not being told of the plans. This has a ring of truth to it, as the Ofo did attack the three French pirogues that carried Father Doutreleau shortly after killing the inhabitants of Fort St. Pierre were killed (Rowland and Sanders 1927:100). The Ofo soon left the region to live with the Tunica (Swanton 1911:230). Over the years they continued to be persecuted by their enemies, the Chickasaw. Around the mid-eighteenth century a number of Ofo lived at the base of the bluffs beneath the fort in Natchez (Rowland et al. 1984:212). They are not heard of again, as a group, after this time (Frank 1975:8; Rowland and Sanders 1932:622-623; Swanton 1946:166).

Tioux

The Tioux may not have actually resided in the Yazoo Bluffs region, but they certainly were located on the upper reaches of the Yazoo River in the late 17th century. As with the other groups discussed thus far, by historic times, they were just a remnant of what had been a much larger prehistoric population. The Tioux were adopted into the lowest class of the Natchez in protohistoric times, and may have been one in the same as the "Koroa" met by La Salle in

1682 south of Natchez (Brain 1982:55). This branch of the Koroa disappears, at least in name, after this date (Swanton 1911:334-336). They were certainly the "Tougoulas" met by d'Iberville in 1699 (Swanton 1911:46-47), but a branch of the Tioux was still on the Yazoo River at this time (Coxe 1940:24). Their language is reported to have been the same as the Tunica. Even the group which lived 20 years among the Natchez are said to have still had:

> . . . the same language as the Thonniquas and does not differ from them in any way as to customs [Diron d'Artaguiette 1722-1723 in Mereness 1916:46].

The Tioux "nation" occurs periodically in discussions of the various wars between the French and the Natchez, but otherwise very little is known about this particular group (Frank 1975:10; Rowland and Sanders 1927:77; Swanton 1911:334-336).

Chakchiuma

The only other historic group known to have resided in the Yazoo Bluffs region in the early eighteenth century was the Chakchiuma (Brain 1988:217; Swanton 1911:294). The Chakchiuma were probably the "Saquechuma" met by DeSoto. Their homeland was on the upper reaches of the Yazoo River at the juncture of the Yalobusha River, where they inhabited territory between the Chickasaws and Choctaw, a somewhat unenviable position.

In 1700 some English traders persuaded the Arkansas to attack the Chakchiuma in order to obtain slaves (Crane 1929:65). The aggressors were repulsed, but the Chakchiuma apparently felt the need for future protection as they subsequently migrated south to the Yazoo Bluffs region.

The Chakchiuma remained in the Yazoo Bluffs region until 1702, at which time Father Davion made peace between the various parties, thus allowing the Chakchiuma to return to their homeland. Their later activities prove them to have been closely allied with the French. In 1722 Chakchiuma ambassadors informed the commandant of Fort St. Pierre of the hostile intentions of the Chickasaw, and after the destruction of the Yazoo colony in 1729 the Chakchiuma were responsible for destroying a portion of the combined Yazoo-Koroa group. They apparently settled for a short while in the Yazoo Bluffs region after this date as they are recorded north of the destroyed French Fort St. Pierre in 1736 (Figure 6). A burial containing pottery identical with that used at Chakchiuma sites in the Tchula-Greenwood Bluff region to the north (Brown 1978a) was discovered in the summit of Mound A at Haynes Bluff in 1974. This burial may relate to the Chakchiuma occupation of the Yazoo Bluffs region (Brain 1988:217, Fig. 167). The Chakchiuma continued their alliance with France in the campaigns waged against the Chickasaw in the 1730s (Swanton 1911:292-296).

Significance Summary

There was some minor aboriginal occupation of the Yazoo Bluffs region in the years following the destruction of the French colony, but the political value of the region as a buffer zone disappeared along with the Indians. Thus, after only about 30 years of French-Indian interaction in this region, the two groups managed to destroy each other, leaving the land to itself. The initial relations, as in so many contact situations, were promising. The "missionary period", which lasted from 1698 to 1706, was a time in which the Indians were

subjected to a small group of Europeans who tried to alter their cultural values. The Tunica Indians received the bulk of attention at this time. The mission eventually failed, possibly for the same reason the later French colony was to fail. Disgruntled groups which were not treated as fairly as the Tunica found comfort in the seduction of English traders. The Tunica and their missionary left the area in 1706, leaving the Yazoo Bluffs region essentially free from French influence for an interval of about 13 years. Throughout this time the political value of the area was realized, but not until the creation of John Law's Company of the West were the resources available to do anything about it.

The "trader period" lasted from 1719 to 1729 and was characterized by the construction of a fort (St. Pierre) and the establishment of a fairly large French settlement. With the dissipation of European supplies and manpower, resulting from the collapse of John Law's colonial venture, combined with Chickasaw troubles, disease, and famine, the colony was soon reduced to a pathetic little community. By 1727 there was little remaining of the splendor which had been noted but four years previously. The destruction of Fort St. Pierre and its inhabitants in 1729, followed by the disappearance of the local aboriginal populations, was the finishing touch to a rapidly dying enterprise.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ 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 Mississippi
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
_X_ University Museum of Natural History
120 Smith Hall
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487
_X_ Other(Specify Repository): Artifacts recovered from the excavation of the Fort St. Pierre Site between 1974 and 1977 are curated in the Peabody Museum, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: [redacted]

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting

[redacted]

Verbal Boundary Description:

[redacted]

Boundary Justification:

[redacted]

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