

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY-NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
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DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

ANGEL MOUNDS, ANGEL SITE

AND/OR COMMON

Angel Mounds State Memorial

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER



NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Evansville

VICINITY OF

Eighth

STATE

Indiana

CODE
18

COUNTY

Vanderburgh

CODE
163

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of Indiana
Division of Museums and Memorials

STREET & NUMBER Department of Natural Resources
202 N. Alabama Street

CITY, TOWN

Indianapolis

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana 46204

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Vanderburgh County Offices
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City County Building

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Evansville,

STATE

Indiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

[REDACTED]

The locations and orientations of the mounds and other features are shown on the accompanying maps. Mound A, the dominant feature at the site, is a bi-level, truncated pyramidal structure [REDACTED]. It is known to have had several additions and revisions until reaching its present form.

[REDACTED], the mound is composed of two pyramidal terraces with a small conical mound on the southeast corner of the upper terrace. Each of the terraced levels is approached by means of a sloping ramp. The lower terrace [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The appended conical mound on top of the higher terrace [REDACTED] surrounding land.

Mound F, the second largest at the site, is also a truncated pyramidal type [REDACTED]

level. Mound E, likewise a truncated pyramid, is almost square in outline with [REDACTED]. Mound B, a large dome-shaped structure, [REDACTED]

Mound C, rectangular in outline, [REDACTED]

Mound D, [REDACTED]

is another small mound, I, with a diameter [REDACTED]

The basal dimensions of dome-

shaped Mound J [REDACTED]

village level. Mound K is an elongate structure, [REDACTED]

appears to be an artificially shaped continuation of the terrace bank. Mound H, [REDACTED]

Mound L, [REDACTED]

terrace level. [REDACTED]

Mound G [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It is thought that Mound G is earlier than the Angel Mounds, dating from Late Woodland times, as opposed to Middle Mississippian, and is therefore not included within the Landmark boundary.

Surface concentrations of occupational debris have been found [REDACTED]

e

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Approximately 1250-1600 A.D. BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

[REDACTED], the Angel Mounds Site was probably occupied from about 1250 to 1600 A.D. It is currently thought to be a single component site representing Middle Mississippian culture during the late prehistoric period. Nearly 30 years of excavation by the Indiana Historical Society and the University of Indiana have revealed numerous features (including 11 mounds, some of the typical Mississippian platform variety; a surrounding embankment or palisade with projecting bastions; numerous square houses; a town square or plaza; and a temple) as well as the recovery of about 2 million catalogued artifacts characteristic of the Middle Mississippian.

DISCUSSION

The Angel Site was probably first settled about 1200 or 1250 A.D. The earliest radiocarbon date from Mound F at the site is 1430 ± 100 A.D. This date, however, most probably does not represent the initial occupation of the site, for archeologists believe that Mound F was constructed during the climax of occupation rather than at the time of initial settlement. The 1200 A.D. date for the earliest occupation has been inferred from the presence at Angel of Ramsey Incised pottery which has been carbon dated to the 12th and 13th centuries at Cahokia and of Cobb Island Complicated Stamp Ware dating from early Mississippian times in Georgia and from the early 13th century in Tennessee.

The Angel Mounds Site exhibits the traits of Mississippian culture which have been found throughout the Southeastern United States, at Cahokia in Illinois, and as far north as Aztalan in Wisconsin. The site supported a large population and probably served as a sort of capital for numerous smaller towns and villages within a radius of 40 or so miles. This statement is supported by current concepts concerning the Mississippian period as well as by current knowledge about the archeological remains near the Angel Mounds Site. Cahokia in East St. Louis, Illinois, is the largest known Middle Mississippian site and is considered the center of Mississippian culture with its more than 100 mounds, its palisade, and the numerous outlying villages and towns throughout American Bottoms. Surrounding Cahokia are various regions, each of which has a central town similar in plan and function to Cahokia but smaller in scale. Angel

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Black, Glenn A., "Archeological Site Report on Angel Mound Site, Indiana,"
ms, National Park Service, Region 1, 1941.
-----, Angel Site, An Archaeological, Historical, and Ethnological Study,
vols. 1 and 2, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, 1967.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY [REDACTED]
UTM REFERENCES

A [REDACTED]	B [REDACTED]
ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C [REDACTED]	D [REDACTED]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Indiana	18	Vanderburgh	163
Indiana	18	Warwick	173

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Francine Weiss, Archeologist, Landmark Review Project (revised 1980)
ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service DATE: July 1975
STREET & NUMBER: 1100 L Street, N.W. TELEPHONE: (202) 523-5464
CITY OR TOWN: Washington, D.C. 20240 STATE: [REDACTED]

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X STATE _____ LOCAL _____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE _____ DATE _____

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature] DATE 10/12/83

ATTEST: _____ DATE _____
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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[REDACTED]
village debris at the site [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. It has been suggested that this represents a plaza and that the low mounds mark the locations of structures formerly surrounding the civic grounds. No large borrow pits have been discerned at the site, although swampy [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].
Early descriptions and aerial reconnaissance at the site recorded the presence of a palisade embankment. The embankment was probably built and rebuilt more than once. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. This latter section shows some possible signs of rebuilding, for it appears to split into a "Y". Another section of the embankment extends [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] One opening within this palisade has been discerned near this juncture. The stockade as it might have looked encircling the village with an extension to Mound C is shown on the accompanying Map F. Worthy of further research is a determination of the relationship between the segments of the embankment. At about 120-foot intervals along the embankments, projections comparable to bastions were noted.

The site has been known since the 19th century. It was probably first mentioned in print by John Collett, the State Geologist of Indiana, in 1875 in connection with a description of the archeology of Vanderburgh County. Collett may not have actually seen the mounds, or he may have seen only Mound G, as did an earlier surveyor Jacob Fowler, in 1805. Nevertheless, the site's existence was undoubtedly known to local residents of the area prior to the time of Collett's report. Interest in the site continued throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries as evidenced by early mentions and descriptions of the mounds and embankments by such well-known archeologists as Cyrus Thomas, Otis T. Mason, Henry Clyde Shetrone, Samuel Barrett, Warren K. Moorehead, etc. The site was deeded to the Indiana Historical Society in 1938 which transferred title to the State in 1947. Although some of the site was destroyed by amateur excavators in the late 19th/early 20th centuries, work was begun as early as 1938 on careful and scientific evaluation and interpretation of the site under Glenn A. Black of the Indiana Historical

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Society. The early work was co-sponsored by the WPA. For the next 27 years, Black and the Historical Society continued their research and excavations. In the later years, the site served as an archeological research station for Indiana University in Bloomington, first under Black and then under James H. Kellar, the current director of the Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archeology. The field work at the site included not only excavation, but extensive surveying and aerial photographic studies.

The excavations at the site have revealed numerous features. Rectangular and square houses of wattle and daub construction averaging 400 sq. ft. in size were discerned from post hole configurations, and town planning of a limited nature was indicated by the multiple rebuilding of houses on the same plot of ground with consistent orientations. The house interiors included a central hearth and benches along the walls. It is estimated that over 200 houses existed at the Angel Site at a given time and that the population may have reached over 1000. The presence of the structure surrounded by a stockade on top of Mound F, of the plaza area west of Mound A, and of the palisade with bastions at about 120-foot intervals has been confirmed by these excavations. Burials were abundant (over 300) and scattered throughout the village. Flesh inhumations were the rule although bundle burials were also present. Only two stone-walled graves were found.

About 2,000,000 catalogued artifacts of stone, bone, shell, clay, and plant fibers have been unearthed from the site relating to the Middle Mississippian period. Over 99% of the catalogued artifacts were pottery sherds. The shell-tempered pottery at the site typical of the Mississippian was mainly utilitarian, but painted wares were relatively abundant. Red filming and negative painting techniques were utilized to produce colored surfaces on the pottery. Positive or direct painting was rare. Although imported items were uncommon, some materials obviously not native to the area were found at the site including small quantities of copper from the Upper Great Lakes area, fluorite and galena from southern Illinois, marine shells from the Gulf of Mexico, and flint from Tennessee. One of the most spectacular artifacts unearthed from the site is an effigy of a seated man carved from one crystal of fluorspar. Cultivated plants--particularly corn, nuts, fruits, shell and shellfish, and deer and wild turkey are known from the archeological record to have contributed to the diets of the inhabitants of the Angel Site. Over 500,000 fragments of non-human bone and 414 plant fragments were unearthed from the site.

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Development of the site has centered around reconstruction of various structures to increase the public's understanding of the nature of a Middle Mississippian site. This development was initially funded by Glenn Black and the Indiana Historical Society and later by grants from Lily Endowment, Inc. A museum has been built slightly outside of the main archeological zone. Several houses, the structure or "temple" and surrounding palisade on top of Mound F, and a portion of the palisade with bastions enclosing the main area of the site have been reconstructed using modern materials to simulate the probable appearance of the Mississippian village. The structure on Mound F also houses museum displays, and interpretive plaques have been placed in various areas throughout the site. The developments do not contribute to the site's national significance which is based on its intrinsic archeological value, but they do aid in the important aspects of interpretation of the site for the public's understanding and enjoyment. Shelter areas provided for visitors within the archeological area, a parking lot, an entrance roadway, and several other small buildings also within landmark boundaries likewise do not contribute to the national significance of the property.

The Angel Site is basically very well preserved. A few modern ditches cut through the site, and some of the mound shapes and sizes had naturally been changed by cultivation and erosion in the past. With the exception of part of Mound A, those mounds within the park are presently covered with grass to prevent further erosion. Vandalism at the site has fortunately been minimal.

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represents one of these provincial or regional centers of Mississippian culture. Surrounding each of these large towns--and Angel is no exception--are remains of smaller towns with one platform mound at the most and villages with no mounds. These smaller towns and villages have yielded the typical shell-tempered Mississippian pottery types which are often identical to wares found in the larger regional centers.

As mentioned previously, the layouts of these larger towns or regional centers exhibit similarities to each other and to Cahokia. Large platform mounds delineate squares around which the various public structures and residential areas are situated. Temples and/or chief's houses were probably built on top of the platform mounds. These centers generally appear to be surrounded by embankments or palisades with bastions. At Angel, the idea of town planning is even more evident, for throughout the several centuries of its existence and in the various areas of the site, the houses seem to have had consistent orientations.

Angel Mounds Site is the easternmost major center of the Middle Mississippian culture in the Ohio Valley. This fact is no great surprise, for the topography changes east of Angel from broad alluvial valleys with low relief to rugged uplands with steep, narrow valleys and little alluvial flood plain. This flood plain environment was an essential part of Mississippian life. It is interesting to note the relative rarity of "foreign" or trade items at Angel (even in comparison to the nearby similar Kincaid Site, also a landmark) which may result from its easternmost location.

Like other Middle Mississippian sites, Angel is located on a major waterway on low land but above the normal inundation level. Its location is well suited to the economic needs of the community. Crops--necessary for the support of the large population centers of the Mississippian period--could be grown on the adjacent higher land which could also serve as a refuge during floods. The Middle Mississippian people were sedentary agriculturalists who supplemented their diets of corn, squash, beans, and sunflowers by hunting and gathering. Three Mile Island screened the site from the main channel of the Ohio and provided an ecological zone which supported various food resources. Likewise, the slough added to the available resources for the community plus served as a "moat" surrounding the village. Cane and hickory for construction purposes, deer, nuts and fruits, fish and mussels, etc., were all available in the vicinity of the site.

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Angel was abandoned prior to 1600 A.D., for there have been no European artifacts found at the site in a Mississippian context. The reasons for abandonment of the large Middle Mississippian centers has yet to be understood. It is thought that the passage of De Soto through the homeland of this group may have played a role in the movement out of the large towns. Likewise, pressure by more nomadic hunting and gathering people on the sedentary agriculturalists may also have had an affect. Exhaustion of natural resources such as wood and soil for agriculture would probably have prompted abandonment. The accumulation of huge amounts of debris might also have played a role at a site such as Angel which could have had a population of over 1000. Warfare is considered only a remote possibility, for there are no signs of physical violence on any of the burials at the site.

Nevertheless, despite the abandonment of the large Mississippian centers, many traits of the culture were carried on into historic times. Thus, comparisons with the ethnohistorical data on tribes in the Southeast (Natchez, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Tunica, Taensa, etc) can aid in the interpretation of the archeological features at a Mississippian site such as Angel. For example, the square wattle and daub house implied by the archeological remains have been described by early explorers as have platform mounds supporting structures (chiefs' houses and temples where dead rulers' bones were placed) and palisades surrounding villages. The wall painting noted on pieces of daub from the Angel Site has been confirmed by references to painted walls from historic sources. Many post holes which were not posts of main dwellings were noted during excavation at Angel; these may represent the summer houses, storage cribs, elevated platforms, drying racks, frames for stretching skins, and/or trophy posts which were present in Indian villages of historic times. Some of the pits excavated at the site may represent holes dug to retrieve clay for daub and pottery, for this practice is known from historic references. The general town plan of the Southeastern historic tribes was also similar to that of the Mississippian with platform mounds delineating a plaza or town square and game court flanked by public structures and houses of important officials. Historic sources indicate that a round structure excavated near the plaza at Angel may have been a sweat house. Even the settlement pattern of large centers surrounded by smaller villages and towns conforms to known patterns in the Southeast during the proto and early historic periods.

The ethnographic sources also lend support to the theories concerning social stratification during Mississippian times. It is obvious that the palisade (over 1 mile in length at Angel) and the huge mounds made community effort

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and organization a necessity. This responsibility must have belonged to a small percentage of the population. The elaborate burials of certain individuals imply the existence of an elite group within the community. Ethnographic sources indicate that structures on the mounds may have been temples and homes of chiefs and lend credence to the theories concerning the stratified nature of Mississippian society.

The excavations at Angel have yielded one of the largest documented collections of artifacts in the eastern United States. This collection has provided much information about the Mississippian period--the widespread culture which dominated the Southeast during late prehistoric/early historic times. Although similarities exist throughout this broad cultural zone, the artifacts and features at Angel provide evidence for the site's closest and most immediate relationships with other Mississippian towns in the Ohio Valley and along the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.

Many questions about the Mississippian in general and the Angel site in particular remain unanswered. The variations which must have occurred during the three or more centuries of occupation at Angel have not been identified. An investigation of Middle Mississippian variations in the Wabash and Ohio Valleys should be conducted as should an examination of similarities and differences between Upper and Middle Mississippian cultures. The millions of artifacts from Angel along with the abundant information on context and features should be helpful in answering some of these questions and possess immense potential for future work. Moreover, the unexcavated portions of Angel comprise about 90% of the site and thus greatly increase its research potential.