

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

HESTER SITE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: HESTER SITE

Other Name/Site Number: Hester-Standifer Creek Site (22Mo569), Beachum-Harrison Site (22Mo1011)

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: N/A

Not for publication: X

City/Town: Amory

Vicinity: X

State: Mississippi

County: Monroe

Code: 095

Zip Code:38821

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): ___

District: ___

Site: X

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

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

JAN 03 2001

by the Secretary of the Interior

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register _____

____ Determined eligible for the _____
National Register

____ Determined not eligible for the _____
National Register

____ Removed from the National Register _____

____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic

Sub: Camp

Current: Agriculture
Landscape

Sub: Agricultural Field
Forest

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS: N/A

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof:

Other:

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form **Page 4****Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.****Site Type**

[REDACTED]

Site one of the largest sites for these periods in the Southeast containing discrete cultural components. Minor archeological components of Middle Archaic, Late Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian period occupations are also present at the site.

Environmental Setting

The Hester Site is located within the Eutaw Hills ecosystem of the Tennessee River Hills physiographic region of northeastern Mississippi. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
1991:48).

The surrounding area is part of the Eutaw soil area, consisting of micaceous glauconite sand layers overlying gravel chert deposits. The chert [REDACTED] appears to have been extensively utilized by Early Archaic peoples in making chipped stone tools (Brookes 1979:1-2).

The Hester Site was first brought to the attention of professional archeologists by two local projectile point collectors. In 1973 and 1974 archeological investigations, described below, concentrated on intact areas of the Hester Site to the northwest of the area explored by the collectors. The 1973 and 1974 excavation area of the site was given the site number of 22Mo569 and the name Hester-Standifer Creek Site, which was a combination of the landowners name and nearest geographical feature. Later, the Hester Site was expanded to the southeast of 22Mo569 to include the area first investigated by the collectors. This part of the Hester Site was given the site number of 22Mo1011 and the name Beachum-Harrison Site to recognize the original discoverers by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Collectively these sites are referred to in the literature as the Hester Site, but it has two state site survey numbers (22Mo569 and 22Mo1011).

Previous Archeological Investigations

In 1973, two local collectors of prehistoric projectile points, Glenn Beachum and Alan Harrison, first located the Hester Site and through their investigations recovered several hundred Early Archaic artifacts, from within an area approximately 45 x 120 feet (Brookes and McGahey 1974:65; Brookes 1979:xi). The extent of the collectors dig area was recorded on Figure 1, but no further work was attempted in that area.

After the collectors brought their discovery to the attention of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, state archeologists Samuel O. Brookes and Samuel O. McGahey, visited

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the site in December of 1973 and excavated five 5 foot by 5 foot test pits (see Figure 1) "in order to reveal the depth and extent of the site and hopefully to determine the cultures present and their sequence" (Brookes and McGahey 1974:65).

The 1973 test pits uncovered a stratified sequence of Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian period occupation at the site. It was determined the lower cultural stratum of the Early Archaic period was intact, and produced a variety of stone projectile point types and tools made mostly of locally available tan Tuscaloosa chert. These included Lost Lake, Greenbrier, Pine Tree, Decatur, and Big Sandy projectile points, along with stone cores, large flakes, prismatic blades, nutting stones, unifacial end scrapers, and bifaces. Brookes and McGahey noted the range of flaked stone and finished tools indicated "tools were completely finished at the site" (1974:68). In addition,

Much of the flaked material and practically all of the finished tools show evidence of heat treating, a process which turns the predominantly tan or cream raw material shades of red, pink, and orange. The heated material if flaked after firing then takes on a glossy appearance [Brookes and McGahey 1974:68].

Dalton and Greenbrier projectile points are similar types which are close in time and may not be classifiable in some situations, particularly when both point types are made from tan Tuscaloosa chert. However, while it was previously believed that some of the brightly colored, heat treated chert found at the Hester site was from the Dalton or Paleo-Indian period these materials have proved to be almost exclusively of the Post Dalton occupation [E. Hilliard, personal communication, 2000]. The Greenbrier points from Hester have a straight, or slightly concave base. In north Mississippi, Greenbrier points are more likely than not to be heat treated to the extent that the usually tan color of the stone has changed completely to some shade of red. The Greenbrier points are much more likely to have been recycled as wedging tools, resulting in multiple impact flake scars emanating from the distal and proximal ends (S. McGahey, personal communication, 1999).

The Early Archaic deposits were found to extend to a depth of four feet. The overlying Middle Archaic, Late Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian period strata, identified on the basis of ceramics and projectile points, had been disturbed by cultivation and confined to the upper one foot of deposits (Brookes and McGahey 1974).

The 1973 test excavations demonstrated a relatively deep midden of intact strata at the Hester Site. However, the sequencing of strata "was not readily apparent because only small widely scattered pits were excavated" (Brookes 1979:xii). For this reason another investigation involving two 5 foot by 5 foot test pits and a trench 150 by 5 feet was excavated at the Hester Site in 1974 by Brookes and McGahey (see Photograph 1 and Figure 1).

This trenching operation produced the same types of Early Archaic tools as found in the five test pits previously excavated, in addition to a number of true Paleo-Indian artifacts, blade cores, piece esquillees (lithics produced using a bipolar flaking technique), adzes, drills, knives, choppers, hammerstones, a mano, anvils, abraders and grooved stones, fire-cracked rock, and bannerstones not found in earlier investigations (Brookes 1979:7-16).

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The original investigations of 1974 consisted of a trench 5 feet wide and 150 feet long, excavated in five foot squares with .2-foot arbitrary levels (see Figure 1). In 1978, Samuel Brookes returned to the Hester Site and expanded on either side of the 1974 trench resulting in a total excavation of 1,350 square feet (Goodyear 1991:49).

Brookes' 1978 excavations again confirmed "a good stratigraphic separation of the Early Archaic notched points associated with the dark red-brown sand zone from the Dalton (Late Paleo-Indian) material in the yellow sand zone" (Goodyear 1991:51). These excavations, however, also identified a previously undetected Quad, or Middle Paleo-Indian horizon below the Dalton occupation in the lower portion of the yellow sand zone (Goodyear 1991:51).

The 1978 excavations also produced one Clovis and one Cumberland fluted projectile point, both made of blue-gray Fort Payne chert from the Tennessee River Valley of northern Alabama, which may indicate a possible Early Paleo-Indian occupation (pre-9000 B.C.) at the Hester Site. The fact that both of the fluted points came from "the lower portion of the yellow sand zone (Middle and Late Paleo-Indian Quad and Dalton occupation) is strongly implied as the stratigraphic location of one or more fluted point occupations" of the Early Paleo-Indian period (Goodyear 1991:51). However, as McGahey notes none of the fluted points "are in good context, and they may all have been transported there by later prehistoric inhabitants" (1996:367).

Site Analysis

The 1973, 1974, and 1978 excavations have determined from the ground surface to the base of cultural occupation there are four distinct soil zones present at the Hester Site: 1) a 1.2 foot deep layer of black sandy humus; 2) a layer of red-brown sand, extending to 3.4 feet below the surface; 3) a layer of yellow sand, occurring 3.4 to 4.4 feet below the surface; and 4) a layer of white sand.

The lowest white sand layer is a culturally sterile, naturally occurring level. Above this is the yellow sand level containing Middle and Late Paleo-Indian (Quad and Dalton) artifacts (9000-8000 B.C). Toward the lower part of this level have been found a few fluted Early Paleo-Indian points (Clovis and Cumberland). More investigations need to be accomplished at the Hester site to determine the extent of this occupation.

Next is the reddish brown sand level, which represents the Early and Middle Archaic occupation (Big Sandy, Beachum, Eva, and Morrow Mountain points) (8000-5000 B.C.). The reddish brown color of this level may be due to the activities of the occupants at the site during the Early Archaic. The top black sandy humus layer is the plow zone containing Late Archaic lithic artifacts, and Woodland and Mississippian ceramics, but in a disturbed context (Brookes 1979:1-2; Goodyear 1991:49-50).

Mr. Samuel McGahey, who excavated the site with Brookes in 1973 and 1974, has also determined that the cultural strata at the Hester Site can be separated not only by projectile point seriation, but also by heat treating techniques that differed through time. According to McGahey:

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The earliest heat treating technique, which seems to have been present from Clovis times, often left little obvious indication on bifaces, the most common remaining indication being a reddened distal end, auricle or both. This phenomenon appears to be the result of heat treating at lower temperatures or at an earlier stage of reduction than was the case with the later technique. The later technique apparently began at the Hester Site in the lanceolate or Early Dalton period, intensified during the later or Side-Notched Dalton period and was used almost exclusively in the succeeding Early Archaic period. This technique, especially in the predominantly tan local chert, resulted in a complete color change to pink, orange or red with a bright, lustrous appearance after flaking [McGahey, personal communication 1994].

Site Integrity

With the exception of the work done by the point collectors and the Department of Archives and History, the lowest cultural levels of the Hester Site have not been disturbed. Intact Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic archeological components in excellent condition offer significant opportunities for future research oriented investigations into the earliest cultural occupations of the Southeast. The site is presently covered by shrubs and bushes (see Photograph 2).

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X
 Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National
 Register Criteria: A ___ B ___ C ___ D X

Criteria Considerations
 (Exceptions): A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G ___

NHL Criteria: Criterion 6

NHL Thematic Framework:

I. Peopling Places

Areas of Significance: Archeology - Prehistoric

Period(s) of Significance: Paleo-Indian, Early Archaic (9000-7000 B.C.)

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: Paleo-Indian (Quad, Dalton) (9000-8000 B.C.)
 Early Archaic (8000-7000 B.C.)

Architect/Builder: N/A

Historic Context: I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN
 POPULATIONS

A. The Earliest Inhabitants - Southeast

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

The Hester Site was a major hunting camp used by Middle and Late Paleo-Indian peoples and a base camp for Early Archaic peoples between 9000 and 7000 B.C. Excavations have shown the major activity at this site was the manufacture of chipped stone projectile points and tools for hunting and butchering of wild game, during the Middle and Late Paleo-Indian (Quad and Dalton) periods. In the Early Archaic Period these site activities continued and are enlarged as demonstrated by the occurrence of stone tools used in wood working and the processing of wild plant foods. Repeated occupations at the Hester Site, probably due to an annual cycle of site utilization, has created intact stratified deposits which have proven of great significance in the verification of sequencing of stone projectile points. The Hester Site has allowed archeologists to assign early projectile points of Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic cultural periods over a large area of the Southeastern United States. Based on the Mississippi State Plan for the Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic periods, the Hester Site is likely to yield significant information on these cultures in the Southeast in the areas of identifying the direction from which the earliest inhabitants entered this area, lithic technologies of the Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic cultures, and refining of the chronology for the appearance of lithic tool types (McGahey n.d.:10-11).

Cultural Activity at the Hester Site

The Dalton, or Late Paleo-Indian, component at the Hester Site, is "the only known occurrence of such an isolated Dalton deposit in Mississippi and one of the few known in the Southeast" (Brookes 1979:17). As a result, the specimens from the Dalton occupation represent a collection not mixed with later cultural materials. Some twelve Dalton projectile points were uncovered in excavations at the Hester Site (see Photograph 3), along with Dalton period tools including burins, knives, blades, flakes, end and side scrapers, graters, pitted stones, cores, pieces esquilles, and hammerstones (Brookes 1979:20-29).

According to Sam Brookes, "all categories of artifacts from the Dalton zone would seem quite in place in a hunting-butcher station" (1979:30). Excavations in the 1974 long trenching operation by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History demonstrated that "at least two separate Dalton occupations occurred at the Hester Site" (Brookes 1979:30). Dalton period tools recovered from the trenching operation did not exhibit heat treatment and were predominately lanceolate in form and had little side notching. Whereas, the Dalton projectile points recovered by the collectors demonstrated greater heat treating and side notching, indicative of a later Dalton occupation in which the occupants employed heat treating in stone-working techniques (Brookes 1979:30).

The Early Archaic Period represents a continuation and elaboration of the base camp occupation first initiated in the Dalton phase. In addition, the occurrence of adzes and nutting stones indicate an expansion of the prehistoric activities at the Hester Site to include wood-working and processing of wild plant foods, respectively (Brookes 1979:48). McGahey notes that hickory nut, walnut, hackberry, acorn, and wild plum remains were recovered from the Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic period occupation levels. No faunal remains were recovered from these occupation levels at the Hester Site (1996:373).

It is interesting to note that the Brand Site in Arkansas, a Dalton phase site, has produced adzes similar to those found in the Early Archaic levels of the Hester Site. It is possible the excavations at the Hester Site have not yielded adzes in the Dalton component because of sampling error. It is also possible that the adze was introduced as a new tool type from Arkansas during the succeeding Early Archaic period (Brookes 1979:44).

Chronology of Late Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic Cultures

The intact stratigraphy of the Hester Site has been of great significance in assigning Southeastern projectile points to Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic cultural periods in other areas of Southeastern United States. According to Sam Brookes,

In contrast to many Alabama sites where Big Sandy [Early Archaic] and Dalton [Late Paleo-Indian] artifacts have been found together, at Hester there is a clear separation between the two types, Dalton points lying beneath Big Sandy points. At the Hester site, therefore, it can be definitely stated that the Big Sandy occupation occurred after the Dalton occupation [1979:32].

In addition to the Big Sandy projectile points, other Early Archaic Period projectile points, such as Greenbrier (see Photographs 3 and 4), Jude, Plevna, Ecusta, Decatur, Autauga, Josselyn (Provisional Type), Pine Tree, Lost Lake, and Beachum, were found in the reddish sandy layer above the Quad (see Photograph 5) and Dalton (Middle and Late Paleo-Indian period) yellow sandy layer (Brookes 1979:33-44). These projectile points are similar to types found in Early Archaic components of the Stanfield-Worley Rockshelter and Russell Cave, both in nearby northern Alabama, where Dalton and Early Archaic points were found in the same strata. The mixed nature of these cave sites made John W. Griffin postulate coexistent traditions of Dalton and Big Sandy point makers. Brookes (1979:52) countered this idea:

[Griffin]. . . concluded that "whether they [Big Sandy points] will eventually be found in a pure context remains to be seen" (Griffin 1974:94). Hester has answered Griffin's question: Big Sandy points are found in a zone above the Dalton assemblage. Moreover, artifacts from the Dalton complex at Hester are light yellow, in contrast to the heat-treated artifacts of later cultures, which are overwhelmingly reddish in color. In fact, analysis of flakes from Hester may lead to another distinguishing factor between these two types: a different heat-treating technique. Hence, not only point form and soil zone but also technological aspects demand a separation [Brookes 1979:52].

As noted above, the 1978 investigations at the Hester Site recovered two fluted points associated with the Early Paleo-Indian Period (pre-9000 B.C.). More investigations would have to be accomplished to determine if there are intact cultural deposits of this early period of occupation at the Hester Site, or whether these specimens were brought into the site for use by people who occupied the site after 9000 B.C., as suggested by one of the investigators of the site.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brookes, Samuel O.

- 1979 *The Hester Site, An Early Archaic Occupation in Monroe County, Mississippi, I. A Preliminary Report.* Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Archaeological Report No. 5, Jackson, Mississippi.

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- 1974 Discovery of an Early Site in Northeast Mississippi. *Mississippi Archaeological Association Newsletter* 9:1-7.

Goodyear, Albert C.

- 1991 The Early Holocene Occupation of the Southeastern United States: A Geoarchaeological Summary. Manuscript submitted for publication, on file South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.

Griffin, John W.

- 1974 Investigations in Russell Cave. *National Park Service, Archeological Research Series* 13.

McGahey, Samuel O.

- n.d. Paleo Indian and Early Archaic Historic Context for Mississippi. Manuscript on file at the National Register Programs Division, National Park Service, Atlanta, Georgia.
- 1994 Personal Communication. Comments in letter on the Draft National Historic Landmark Study for the Hester Site. On file in the Southeast Regional Office, October 11.
- 1996 Paleoindian and Early Archaic Data from Mississippi. IN: *The Paleoindian and Early Archaic Southeast*, edited by David G. Anderson and Kenneth E. Sassaman, pp. 354-384. The University of Alabama Press, Tualoosa.
- 1999 Personal Communication. Comments in letter on the National Historic Landmark Study for the Hester Site. On file in the Southeast Regional Office. November 10.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # _____
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other(Specify Repository): Artifacts and notes from the 1973, 1974 and 1978 excavations are held at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History curation facility in Jackson, Mississippi.

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