

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received *if not as noted when received*  
DEC 23 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Woodland Sites in the James River Basin *TR*

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number James River Basin  not for publication

city, town Multiple — vicinity of

state South Dakota code 46 county Multiple code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site (s)	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input 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 Multiple, see continuation sheets

street & number

city, town — vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multiple, see continuation sheets

street & number

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Multiple, see continuation sheets has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Archaeological Research Center

city, town Ft. Meade state SD

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This nomination represents a substantial portion of the known data base for the Woodland occupation A.D. 1-1000 in the James River Basin. Included in this nomination are 24 mound sites and 2 occupation sites located along the James River in South Dakota. (Fig. 1)

There are over 100 known mound sites in the Basin, but unfortunately a number of these sites have been adversely affected by agriculture, construction and vandalism. Although those sites that have been disturbed could contribute information, this thematic nomination includes only those sites which retain integrity and represent the best portion of the existing data base.

The very limited, past research on the mound sites, indicates they contain human burials and associated Woodland style artifactual materials. In this nomination the number of mounds per site range from 1 to 13. They also vary in size. The edge of bluffs overlooking the James River valley, often near the confluence of tributary streams, appear to have been the favored location for mound construction.

The location of Woodland occupation sites in the James River Basin is varied. In the lower James River valley several occupation sites have been found on the floodplain, deeply buried by alluvial deposits. These sites were later exposed by erosion when the James River cut a new course. Some of these sites are approximately 1 meter below the existing ground surface and the paleosol in which they are located ranges from 1 to 1.5 meters in depth. Further north, when the dimensions of the valley diminish, some of the occupation areas are on the blufftop, above the floodplain.

### Geographical Area

Although the James River Basin proper extends into North Dakota, for the purposes of this nomination, the Basin will be defined as that which starts at the northern border of South Dakota and extends down to the southern border, ending at the Missouri River.

The James River Basin, covering 250,000 square miles, is one of four physiographic subdivisions of eastern South Dakota. The Basin is a broad, shallow trough 50 to 70 miles in width, extending north to south across South Dakota. (Fig. 2)

Robert Alex (1981: 23-25) summarizes the topography of the Basin:

The surface of the Basin is relatively flat with some undulations due to late Wisconsin glacial ground moraines. In the northern portion of the Basin, a large, very level, featureless plain indicates the bed of glacial Lake Dakota. There are a few hills which break the otherwise monotonous Basin floor. Near the towns of Mitchell and Redfield, erosional remnants of bedrock stand conspicuously against the plain. In the southern-most portion of the Basin, the plain is interrupted by extensive erosional remnants of chalk and shale, which combine with late Wisconsin and moraines to form the James River Highlands.

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In the center of the Basin is the valley of the James River. The valley is a steep-sided, flat-bottomed trench about one half mile wide and 100 feet deep. The valley once carried the discharge of the receding Wisconsin glacial ice and later functioned as the outlet of Lake Dakota. The modern James River is a poor stream by comparison. It falls only 100 feet from the North Dakota border to its confluence with the Missouri River and at times it scarcely flows at all. The river follows a twisted, convoluted path through the valley, often flanked by old stream channels, oxbow lakes, and marshes.

The James Basin separates two highland areas. The nearly level floor of the Basin stands in contrast to the more rugged glacial features of the Coteau des Prairie to the east and the occasional ragged breaks and glacial morains of the Coteau du Missouri to the west. The transition from the Basin to the adjacent highlands may be an abrupt escarpment of two hundred feet or more although in some areas the transition is barely perceptible.

The James River Basin lacks good quality lithic resources used in the manufacture of chipped stone implements except for the silicious rock found in the glacial outwash and till. For the most part, Bijou Hills, in the Coteau du Missouri to the west, is the nearest source of extensive lithic material suitable for the manufacture of stone implements. The shale, sandstone, chalk and Sioux Quartzite that outcrop in the Basin were of limited use aboriginally.

#### Climate

The climate of the James River Basin is a continental-type, characterized by extremes in temperature and precipitation. Temperatures within the Basin range from 115° F to -40° F. Rainfall in the Basin is erratic and averages about 19 inches annually. Clay County in the southern portion of the Basin receives an average of 27 inches per year, whereas in the northern portion, Brown County receives 18 inches per year. About 3/4 of the total precipitation occurs during the growing season, April to September inclusive. The average growing season ranges from 130 days in the north, to 150 days in the south. Days during the growing season average 11.5 hours of sunshine.

Persistent strong surface winds are characteristic of the Basin, averaging 11 miles per hour in the summer and 12 miles per hour in the winter. Winds, combined with the extremes in temperature, can produce a very hostile environment for human habitation, particularly in the winter. The great variation of precipitation can transform lush grasslands into near desert. Depending on the vagaries of climate, the Basin environment can alternate between very productive to rather barren.

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Flora and Fauna

The vegetation of the James River Basin is characterized by three dominate grasses: wheatgrass, bluestem, and needlegrass. This association of grasses represents a transition from the Bluestem Prairie to the short grasses of the western South Dakota Plains and contains a mixture of dominants from the High Plains and lowland prairie. Thus, the James River Basin represents a biological transition from midwestern prairie to western plains grasslands.

The modern James River Valley is characterized by a floral association designated the Northern Floodplain Forest. Cottonwood, American elm and willow are the dominate species, however green ash, hackberry, bur ask, box elder, eastern juniper, American plum, and chokecherry are also found. These species represent the "potential" natural vegetation of the Valley. However, natural or man-made prehistoric events may have changed the nature of the forests prior to Euro-American settlement of the region and there are several historic references to the near lack of trees in the James Valley prior to Euro-American settlement.

The faunal assemblage of the James River Basin include 16 species of fish, 150 species of resident and migratory birds and 51 species of mammals. Larger species, not in the Basin today, but considered to be of significant importance to pre-historic populations include bison, elk, antelope and bear.

Previous Investigations

The nomination area has been the subject of archaeological research for a considerable period of time. Interest in the area has not been continuous, but it has drawn archaeologists, ethnologists and explorers into several portions of the region. In 1804 Lewis and Clark mention the James River, calling it both the Jaques and the Yankton. They also visited the "Spirit Mound" located in the southeast corner of the Basin. The mound is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1880 T.H. Lewis, under the sponsorship and aid of A.J. Hill created the "Northwestern Archaeological Survey." In 1884 Lewis recorded and mapped two mound groups in Spink County. This site, now called Turtle Creek Mounds is included in this nomination. In 1923 W.H. Over excavated Mound 3, of the northernmost group. Skeletal remains and mortuary artifacts were recovered in the excavation unit.

From 1920 through 1940 the University of South Dakota field teams, under the direction of W.H. Over, were active in recording sites in the James Basin. Mr. Over, a pioneer in South Dakota archaeology, initiated the statewide archaeological survey and was the first to investigate, record, and attempt a comprehensive interpretation of the state's prehistoric resources.

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In 1947 James Howard with the assistance of Lester Black conducted a reconnaissance survey of sites located along the James River and its tributaries in Spink County. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the Smithsonian's River Basin Survey apparently under contract with the National Park Service. Howard and Black felt that a study of the sites in Spink County would "prove very valuable in the correlation with work already accomplished in other areas...with the material from Mitchell, Cheyenne River, and other sites in South Dakota." (Howard and Black 1947:1) Mound sites 39SP2, 39SP3, and 39SP12, recorded by Howard and Black, are included in this nomination.

A survey of the James River Valley, supported by a state Historical Preservation Center grant was conducted during the field seasons of 1977 through 1980 and also the field season of 1982. Personnel from the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center, Ft. Meade, and the Historical Preservation Center, Vermillion, supervised the field activities. In 1977 the survey was under the direction of Steve Ruple of the Historical Preservation Center. From 1978 to 1982, Robert Alex coordinated the project.

The primary objective of the survey was to provide maximum and representative recovery of prehistoric and historic archaeological site information along the James River. The strategy chosen to achieve this goal was to survey as much of the James River Valley, tributary valleys, and adjacent bluffs as possible. The survey method involved a systematic inspection of the ground by a group of observers who traversed the area in regularly spaced intervals. In addition to this method canoe trips were employed, to observe the cut banks, in 1977, 1979, and 1980. Several buried Woodland habitations were located during the canoe survey.

This survey was the first extensive archaeological investigation done of the James River Valley. Sites previously recorded by earlier surveyors were relocated and assessed for integrity and new sites were recorded. Woodland sites found by the James River survey make up a majority of this nomination.

#### Records Search

The first stage of this nomination included a record search conducted at the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center, Ft. Meade. Major sources consulted in this search include Archaeological Field Notes of W.H. Over (Sigstad & Sigstad, 1973), and James River Survey, Vol. 1,11,111 (Buechler, Keller; Haberman; Keller & Keller; respectively). Other sources consulted are listed in the bibliography.

#### Boundaries #7 and #9

The boundaries determined for the sites in this nomination fall into three categories: 1) single/multiple mound sites, 2) single/multiple mound sites with associated cultural material scatter, and 3) buried occupation sites. The boundaries for these site types will be delineated in the site descriptions.

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To clarify the three site type boundaries, they are defined as:

1. Single/Multiple mound sites:

The boundary of a site containing a single mound will be defined as the boundary of the mound.

A multiple mound site boundary is based on the smallest area into which the mounds can be contained.

2. Single/Multiple mound sites with associated cultural material scatter:

The boundary for these sites is based upon the areal extent of the cultural material scatter. The cultural material scatter boundary is defined by the density of cultural material found on the modern ground surface and is based upon the ground surface visibility at the time of survey.

3. Buried Occupation sites:

As was discussed at the beginning of this section, sites of this nature are buried under alluvial deposits and their discovery is due to the erosional action of the river. The provisional site boundaries are based on the length of cultural material visible in the cut bank and the topographic nature of the site area.

The boundaries for the sites in this nomination have been determined, in the field, at the time of survey.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates      Prehistoric      Builder/Architect      NA

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Significant in the area of prehistory, this nomination represents the most significant sites of Woodland occupation in the James River Valley of South Dakota. Little is known of this cultural period, AD 1 to AD 1000, and these sites are the complete data base.

The Woodland occupation of the James River Basin is poorly understood. Our knowledge of the tradition is based primarily on an extrapolation of information from sites in Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota. Although burial mounds are the most conspicuous Woodland remains, few have been excavated. Early mound excavations were unprofessional by modern standards; methodology was not precise and the results of the finds were unpublished. Nearly all of our knowledge of South Dakota Woodland comes from excavations conducted in the Missouri River trench. Of the few Woodland occupation sites mentioned in the literature most are part of large multi-component sites. Because of the paucity of material recovered from the Woodland component, very little effort was made to analyze the recovered information. Existing information suggests the subsistence pattern of the Woodland peoples oriented toward bison hunting, small animal trapping and plant gathering. Burial goods indicate trade with other areas. Ceramic typology is not fully defined. Pottery is thick walled and grit tempered. Decoration can consist of punctates, incising, and cord impressing on the rim area, while the body is generally cord marked. Lithics include a variety of side notched points, knives, stone scrapers, and hammerstones. Evidence of permanent housing is not well documented and features consist mainly of storage pits and fireplaces.

The Woodland sites of the James River Basin meet National Register criteria for their potential to yield significant prehistoric data. This research potential would encompass: chronology, site function, settlement/subsistence patterns, processual analysis, paleo-environmental reconstruction and mortuary practices.

In summary, the Woodland sites of the James River Basin presented in this nomination provide the best of the existing data base to answer the culture/historical questions of the Woodland occupation of this part of South Dakota. Placing the sites on the National Register will help insure their preservation until such a time that they can be more thoroughly investigated.



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tributaries. Copy on file at the South Dakota Archaeological Research  
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Vol. 1, 1977. Vermillion.
- Lewis, T.H.  
1898 Northwestern Archaeological Survey. St. Paul, Minnesota. Pioneer Press  
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1983 James River Survey, Vol. I, II, III. Contract Investigation Series  
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Dakota State University. Bulletin 582. Brookings.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service  
1975 Lower James Resource Conservation and Development Project Plan. Huron.
- Zimmerman, Larry  
1981 Some Perspectives on the Woodland Tradition in South Dakota. The  
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Dakota Archaeological Society, Vermillion.

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name James River Basin Woodland Sites Thematic Resources

State South Dakota BEADLE Co. Water Court accept 1/30/84

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- |     |                          |   |            |                                     |
|-----|--------------------------|---|------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Site 39BE14              | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/30/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 2.  | Site <sup>39</sup> BE15  | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/30/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 3.  | Site <sup>39</sup> BE 23 | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/30/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 4.  | Site 39BE46              | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/30/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 5.  | Site 39BE48              | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/31/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 6.  | Site 39BE57              | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/31/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 7.  | Site 39BE64              | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/31/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 8.  | Site 39BE94              | <del>Substantive Review</del> <u>Return</u> | for Keeper |                                     |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 9.  | Site 39DV9               | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/31/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |
| 10. | Site 39DV24              | Substantive Review                          | for Keeper | 1/31/84<br><u>Gyonne D. Stewart</u> |
|     |                          |   | Attest     |                                     |

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name James River Basin Woodland Sites Thematic Resources  
State South Dakota *Cour* ~~1/31/84~~

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Site 39HS3 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 1/31/84

12. Site 39HT14 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 1/31/84

13. Site 39HT24 **Substantive Review** Return *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 1/31/84

14. Site 39HT27 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 2/1/84

15. Site 39HT29 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 2/1/84

16. Sites 39HT30 and 39HT202 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 2/1/84

17. Site 39SB15 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 2/1/84

18. Site 39SB18 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 2/1/84

19. Site 39SB31 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 2/1/84

20. Site 39SP2 **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Yvonne B. Stewart  
Attest 2/1/84

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State South Dakota BEADLE CO

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

21. Site 39SP3

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Attest

22. Site 39SP12

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

23. Site 39SP19

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

24. Site 39SP24

Substantive Review

Return for

Keeper

Attest

25. Site 39SP37

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

26. Site 39SP46

Substantive Review

for Keeper

Attest

27. Site 39HS7

Substantive Review

Return

Keeper

Attest

28. Site 39ML32

Substantive Review

Return

Keeper

Attest

29. Site 39B47

Substantive Review

Return

Keeper

Attest

30. Site 39YK2, 39YK3

Substantive Review Return

Keeper

Attest