

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Shiloh Indian Mounds Site

and or common

2. Location

street & number Shiloh National Military Park

not for publication

city, town Shiloh vicinity of

state Tennessee 38376 code 47 county Hardin code 071

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name National Park Service

street & number Southeast Region, 75 Spring Street, SW

city, town Atlanta vicinity of state Georgia 30303

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Park Files

street & number Shiloh National Military Park

city, town Shiloh state Tennessee 38376

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Shiloh NMP Boundary Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date April 27, 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Park Files

city, town Shiloh National Military Park, Shiloh state Tennessee 38376

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

Site Type: The Shiloh Indian Mounds Site, located within Shiloh National Military Park, is a fortified ceremonial mound complex. The site consists of six Late Mississippian temple mounds; one Late Woodland burial Mound; associated village site; and, a low earth embankment upon which had stood a wooden palisade with square bastions.

Environmental Setting: The Shiloh Indian Mounds Site is located on a high bluff on the west bank of the Tennessee River, in Hardin County, Tennessee. Geographically, the site is situated on the eastern edge of the West Tennessee Coastal Plain (Figure 1). The Coastal Plain is defined as the area lying west of the Tennessee River and to the east of the loess hills that flank the Mississippi River Valley.

The high bluff on which the site is located is composed of a Cretaceous Age formation, consisting of clayey and silty sands, and occasional beds of gravel (Beditz 1980:1), built up from the outwash of material from glaciers over tens of thousands of years. Environmentally, the area is within the transitional zone between the mixed mesophytic climax forest of the Cumberland Mountains and the oak-hickory climax forests west and south of the Tennessee River. Three forest types are represented at the Shiloh Indian Mounds site, upland oak, bottomland oak-sweetgum, and mixed hardwood ravine forest (Brewer 1987:14-15). No past environmental study has been undertaken.

Previous Archeological Investigations: The Shiloh Indian Mounds Site was first investigated in 1899, by Colonel Cornelius Cadle, an early superintendent of Shiloh Battlefield. Cadle dug into the center of the conical shaped burial mound (Mound C) (See Figure 2). At the center of this mound Cadle uncovered the remains of a log tomb with three burials and a human effigy pipe (See Figures 3-5) (Cadle 1902:218-220).

The next investigation of the site was by Clarence B. Moore, in 1915. Moore was denied permission to excavate at the site by the superintendent, although he did draw the first map of the site (See Figure 2). At this time Moore did not observe any embankment, palisade, or bastions, or small house mounds associated with the village. Moore's plan illustrates Mounds A, B, D, E, F, and G, as square flat-topped temple mounds, and Mound C as a conical shaped burial mound. Moore also noted that the superintendent had built a small residence on the largest mound (Mound A, see Figure 6) (residence removed by the late 1920's), and that following the Battle of Shiloh in 1862, Mound G had served as a temporary cemetery for "...the dead of the Twenty-eighth Illinois Infantry, prior to their removal to the National Cemetery nearby. The traces of the burial trenches in this mound (Mound G) might be mistaken for vestiges of former investigations were not the facts a matter of history" (Moore 1915:225). The contours of Mound G have been restored (see Figure 7).

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 500–1000 AD
 1400–1600 AD **Builder/Architect** NA

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Shiloh Indian Mounds Site, located in Shiloh National Military Park, is the largest extant fortified Mississippian ceremonial mound complex in the Tennessee River Valley. The site is significant as a source for testing the existing chronology of Mississippian sites in the Tennessee River Valley, as well as new concepts and theories on Mississippian Period subsistence, and social and political organization. Furthermore, the site contains the remains of two distinct prehistoric periods, Woodland and Mississippian, which reflect the change in the makeup of prehistoric societies in the Tennessee River Valley, and the eastern United States as a whole. Equally important is the integrity of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site which has already produced unusual and elaborate material from the Woodland and Mississippian periods.

Chronology: For well over a hundred years conical burial mounds and ceremonial complexes of flat-topped temple mounds have been the subject of speculation and archeological inquiry. Most of the early investigations were on the order of relic hunting, and mapping of earthworks. During the 1930's, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), sponsored a number of large scale archeological surveys and data recovery programs, in conjunction with their programs of dam and reservoir construction, which established basic chronology of prehistoric periods in the Tennessee River Valley.

These archeological investigations along the Tennessee River involved surveys and data recovery at Kentucky Dam (Webb 1952); Pickwick Dam (Webb&DeJarnette 1942); and Gunter'sville Basin (Webb & Wilder 1951). From a comparison of material from these TVA excavations, and the 1930's Smithsonian work conducted at Shiloh Mounds, Dr. Smith has proposed four Late Mississippian cultural areas or provinces for the Tennessee River Valley. All of these areas appear to have been controlled by a large ceremonial mound complex, surrounded by a palisade with bastions (Jonathan Creek, Dover Landing, Shiloh, and Rogers Island) (See Figure 11). In 1977, Smith wrote that with the exception of the Shiloh site, all of these large ceremonial complexes "...for which comparative data are available have vanished beneath the waters of one reservoir or another" (1977:24). Therefore, only Shiloh exists to verify dating conclusions from investigations conducted on sites now destroyed, using dating techniques not available during the 1930's.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 81 acres

Quadrangle name Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	3	7	9	5	6	0	3	8	8	9	7	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

1	6	3	7	9	6	0	0	3	8	8	9	1	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

1	6	3	7	9	2	0	0	3	8	8	9	1	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

1	6	3	7	9	2	4	0	3	8	8	9	7	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification See Continuation Sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state Tennessee code 47 county Hardin code 071

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark R. Barnes, Ph.d

organization Southeast Regional Office, NPS

date June 6, 1988

(404) 331-2654

street & number 75 Spring Street, SW

telephone FTS 242-2654

city or town Atlanta

state Georgia 30303

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 _____

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

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The only major archeological excavation of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site was conducted by Dr. Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., and his assistant, Mr. Moreau B. Chambers, of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, in 1933 and 1934, under the Civil Work Administration Program. No final report exists on this excavation, and the lack of a site excavation plan map makes it difficult to determine where Roberts and Chambers excavated.

In 1976, the National Park Service contracted with Dr. Gerald P. Smith, of Memphis State University, to analyze the work done by Roberts and Chambers. Using extant field notes and the preliminary reports of Roberts (1935), Chambers (1935), and Stirling (1936), Smith was able to determine the following:

"There is no map showing location or extent of any of the (Roberts') excavations, although profiles exist for excavation in the vicinity of (House) Mounds Q, R, S, and V; (Platform Temple) Mound E; and between (Platform Temple) Mounds E and A. Field notes indicate a series of trenches between (Platform Temple) Mound D, while photographs suggest more trenches south of (Platform Temple) Mound F. (Burial) Mound C was completely excavated, as were small (House) Mounds I, O, P, R, S, and W. (Platform Temple) Mound E was trenched and profiled" (Smith 1977:2).

Smith was able to ascertain that up to twenty-four trenches were excavated at regular intervals in the areas surrounding the mounds. However, the lack of a site excavation map makes their exact location difficult to determine. Roberts' trenches revealed the remains of 30 prehistoric houses, round in shape (based upon the arrangement of post holes) with walls constructed of wattle and daub. A square shaped, possible temple complex, was located east of Mound A, and numerous refuse deposits were uncovered by Roberts' trenching activity.

It was Roberts' investigations that for the first time noted the presence of a "...palisaded rampart extending along its (the sites) exposed western boundary from one ravine to another. Traces of this old rampart may still be seen, although the poles of the stockade have long since disappeared" (Chambers 1935:1). Roberts apparently trenched the palisade line in several places. (See Figure 8)

In the interval of over forty years between Roberts' and Smith's work at the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site, work on prehistoric sites throughout the Tennessee River Valley, in conjunction with water projects, have developed a cultural chronology based on ceramic typology. This typology allowed Smith to identify two distinct pre-

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historic occupations at the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site, when he analyzed Roberts' excavated material.

Smith identified a Late Woodland occupation (500-1000 AD) characterized by Mulberry Creek Cordmarked, Baytown Plain, and Larto Red ceramics; and a Late Mississippian occupation (1400-1600 AD) identified by Neeley's Ferry Plain, Old Town Red Filmed, Matthews Incised, Beckwith Incised, Kimmswick Fabric Impressed, and a Matthews Incised variant commonly included in Moundville Incised when found in northern Alabama (1977:2).

Following the analysis of the material from Roberts' excavation, Dr. Smith cut two trenches across the western palisaded embankment. The embankment was found to be .35 meters in height and 2.5 meters in basal width (See Figure 9). The embankment was built up of basket loads of dirt, and on the crest of the embankment the palisade was erected. At regular intervals along the palisade line are located square shaped bastions. Smith completely excavated one bastion and found it to be three meters on a side (See Figure 10). Other testing by Smith in the village uncovered stratified cultural deposits indicating an initial Late Woodland occupation, followed by an extensive Late Mississippian occupation (Smith 1977-23-24). In addition to finding examples of all of the previously mentioned ceramic types, Smith also found projectile points, greenstone celt fragments and other lithic material indicative of a Late Mississippian date (1977:12-14).

From his laboratory analysis of Roberts' work and his own fieldwork, Dr. Smith was able to demonstrate that the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site contained two distinct prehistoric occupations. The Late Woodland component consists of Burial Mound C, and associated village refuse deposits, which Smith viewed as "...closely related to components downstream near the Kentucky border, but is part of a general expansion of Mississippi Valley Late Woodland cultures which spread up the Tennessee River at least through Pickwick Basin (in northern Alabama). The contrast between the Shiloh Late Woodland component and those in the Pickwick Basin suggest that different, though roughly contemporaneous, groups are involved. The burial pattern in Mound C is clearly Woodland and also quite different from that of nearby Copena Burial mounds..." (1977:23).

Smith characterized the Late Mississippian component of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site as "...the most extensive mound-and-plaza complex in the Tennessee Valley and probably the best preserved Mississippian fortification system left in the Nation" (1977:23).

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Site Integrity: The Shiloh Indian Mounds Site is the largest remaining fortified ceremonial mound complex in the Tennessee River Valley. Despite past non-scientific work on Mound C, the burial and later removal of Civil War dead in Mound G (since restored), and the placement of a superintendents residence on the top of Mound A (now removed); the site exists in an excellent state of preservation. The state of integrity is due solely to its acquisition during the 1890's as part of Shiloh National Military Park.

Statement of Significance: Shiloh Indian Mounds Site, located in Shiloh National Military Park, is the largest extant fortified Mississippian ceremonial mound complex in the Tennessee River Valley. The site is significant as a source for testing the existing chronology of Mississippian sites in the Tennessee River Valley, as well as new concepts and theories on Mississippian Period subsistence, and social and political organization. Furthermore, the site contains the remains of two distinct prehistoric periods, Woodland Mississippian, which reflect the change in the makeup of prehistoric societies in the Tennessee River Valley, and the eastern United States as a whole. Equally important is the integrity of the Shiloh Indian Mounds site which has already produced unusual and elaborate material, from the Woodland and Mississippian periods.

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The opportunity to duplicate, or as necessary modify, the dating of prehistoric sites in the Tennessee River Valley exists at Shiloh, because of abundant charcoal remains preserved at the site. In the summer of 1979, the National Park Service conducted a small testing program in the vicinity of Mound A that recovered charcoal samples that were subjected to radiocarbon dating.

The radiocarbon dates derived from Shiloh in 1979 indicated a continuous occupation of the site from the Late Woodland through the entire Mississippian period rather than occupation at two separate prehistoric times, as postulated by Smith using ceramics for dating. The excavators point out that "none of the charcoal came from identifiable hearths but was collected throughout the level, it is possible that the burned material dates the midden or fill" (Beditz & Bellamo 1980:21). The charcoal tested may have represented a contaminated sample, which would account for the differences in dating for the site using traditional ceramic typology versus radiocarbon dating.

Intact datable cultural remains enhance the significance of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site for its potential to verify or correct the dating of Woodland and Mississippian period sites in the Tennessee River Valley. Dating is presently based on ceramic typologies established from sites excavated in the 1930's, but which have since been destroyed.

Subsistence: The excavations of the 1930's on major prehistoric sites in the Tennessee Valley lacked the technical means to achieve a clear picture of the subsistence base of the Woodland and Mississippian prehistoric periods. Modern archeological investigations, using the techniques of faunal and pollen analysis, have begun to expand our knowledge about how prehistoric cultures subsisted by identifying the types of plants and animal food resources they hunted and collected or cultivated.

The Shiloh Indian Mounds Site contains the intact remains of both Woodland and Mississippian prehistoric periods. Each of these two periods reflect significant changes in the makeup of prehistoric societies in the Tennessee River Valley, and eastern United States as a whole. The Woodland Period represents a pivotal chapter in the prehistory of the eastern United States. This period bridges the cultural and temporal gulf between basically egalitarian hunting and gathering groups of the preceramic Archaic Period, and the socially complex, agricultural societies of the Mississippian Period.

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Due to the loss of the other large fortified ceremonial complexes to water projects in the Tennessee River Valley, only Shiloh is available for the study of prehistoric subsistence. Recent archeological work at Shiloh has produced well preserved evidence of prehistoric subsistence in the form of animal bones, fresh water mussel shells, and lithic tools and points used to procure food resources (Beditz & Bellamo 1980:21). The undisturbed nature of the Shiloh site also makes it an ideal candidate for the recovery of remains of naturally occurring and cultivated food plants, that were important to the subsistence base of the prehistoric peoples.

Due to the integrity of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site, and the fact that it is the only extant representative of a Mississippian ceremonial center in the Tennessee River Valley, the site may have the potential to answer a number of research questions about the life-styles and activities of the Mississippian culture. Subsistence remains exist at Shiloh may be very significant in the future in resolving questions regarding the role of hunting and gathering versus the cultivation of food resources; when corn was first introduced into the Tennessee Valley; and, whether the Mississippian peoples of the Tennessee were practicing true agricultural subsistence.

Social and Political Organization: The Woodland and Mississippian periods of occupation at Shiloh Indian Mounds Site are important for an understanding of the cultural mechanisms and social changes which occurred throughout the eastern United States during which small scale Woodland Period occupations gave rise to the complex large village societies of the Mississippian Period.

"After about AD 800-900, important changes in subsistence technology and society began to occur throughout much of the Mississippi, Tennessee, and Ohio Valleys; changes which eventually led to the establishment of Mississippian and Fort Ancient cultures in these areas. The adoption of corn-based agriculture, the introduction of the bow and arrow, a resurgence of ceramic decoration, an overall increase in ceramic vessel size, and increasing sedentism characterize the latter part of the Late Woodland in many areas, especially in regions where subsequent Mississippian cultures flourished. In effect, these "advanced" terminal Late Woodland cultures set the stage for subsequent developments" (Railey 1987:14).

The Mississippian Period entails an observable change from the earlier Woodland Period. Instead of isolated Woodland conical burial mounds,

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the Mississippian people constructed large earthen platform mounds as substructures for temples and elite residences. The Mississippian settlement system appears to have included a hierarchy of habitation site types, of which the most archeologically visible were planned towns, or fortified ceremonial centers, such as Shiloh. These centers consisted of plazas or open spaces flanked by temple mounds, and usually enclosed by a defensive palisade. These centers apparently controlled outlying farming villages and hamlets, which supported the elite in the ceremonial center with their goods and labor. The Mississippian people had an economy based on hunting and gathering, and the cultivation of corn (maize), beans, and squash. The political organization of the centers was locally controlled by a chiefdom, however, large Late Mississippian sites throughout the eastern United States appeared to have a shared religious iconography (Lewis 1987:2, Anonymous 1987:1).

The largest archeological and architectural component of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site was constructed in the Mississippian Period. During this time a social and political organization was developed by the Mississippian peoples to build six substantial flat-topped temple mounds, a protective wooden palisade built on a raised earthen embankment with numerous square bastions, and a number of circular shaped residential structures made of wattle and daub construction.

Of particular interest to archeologists are the fortified remains at Mississippian Period sites. Dr. Louis Larsen, in his study of fortified Mississippian mound sites, noted the architectural similarity between the fortified Mississippian sites of the Tennessee River Valley such as Shiloh Indian Mounds Site and the Angel Site, in Indiana and the Etowah Site, in Georgia (1972:385). Larsen ascribed the construction of these fortified mound complexes to warfare between chiefdoms resulting from competition for arable land (1972:383). In the words of one of its excavators, Dr. Gerald Smith, Shiloh is "...probably the best preserved Mississippian fortification system left in the nation" (1977:23).

In addition to the Shiloh Indian Mounds site providing information about the function of fortified Mississippian sites, its integrity could be used to address other questions about social and political organization on sites of this period. For example, how did the chiefdoms of these large Mississippian communities exercise control over outlying villages and hamlets; what evidence is there for trade and exchange of goods between the Tennessee River Valley and other Mississippian areas; and, what factors would account for the disappearance of Mississippian groups.

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From Point A on the Pittsburg Landing USGS Map proceed southward along the western shoreline of the Tennessee River for approximately 1,860 feet (or about 560 meters), to Point B along the western shoreline of the Tennessee River. From Point B proceed directly west (along the National Park Service) Boundary for approximately 2,000 feet (or about 600 meters), to Point C. From Point C proceed north approximately 2,000 feet (or about 600 meters), to Point D. From Point D proceed eastward for approximately 1,860 feet (or about 560 meters) to Point A.

The area enclosed by this boundary covers the elevated area that contains all of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site, which includes the seven mounds, associated village site, and earth embankment, for the palisade line on the western edge of the site.

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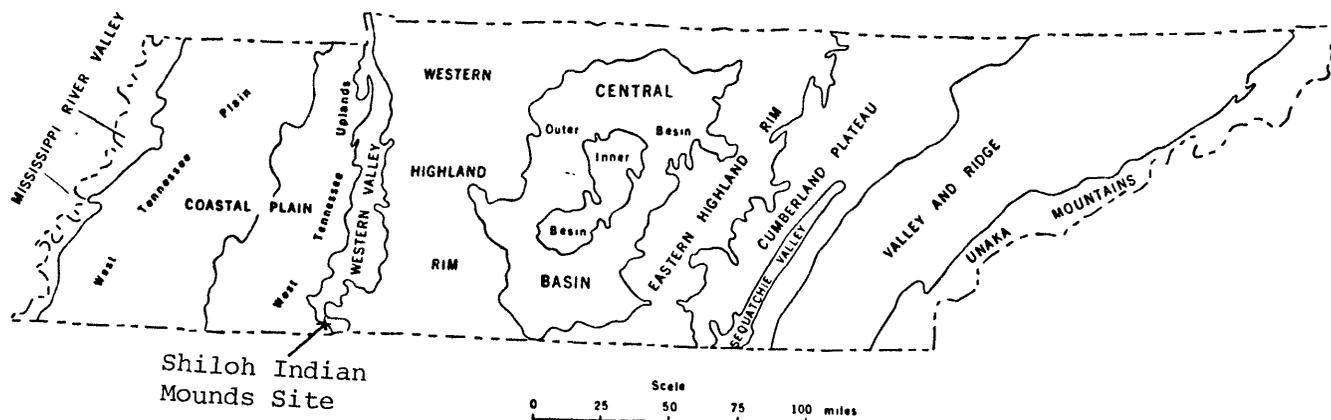


Figure 1. Generalized physiographic map of Tennessee.

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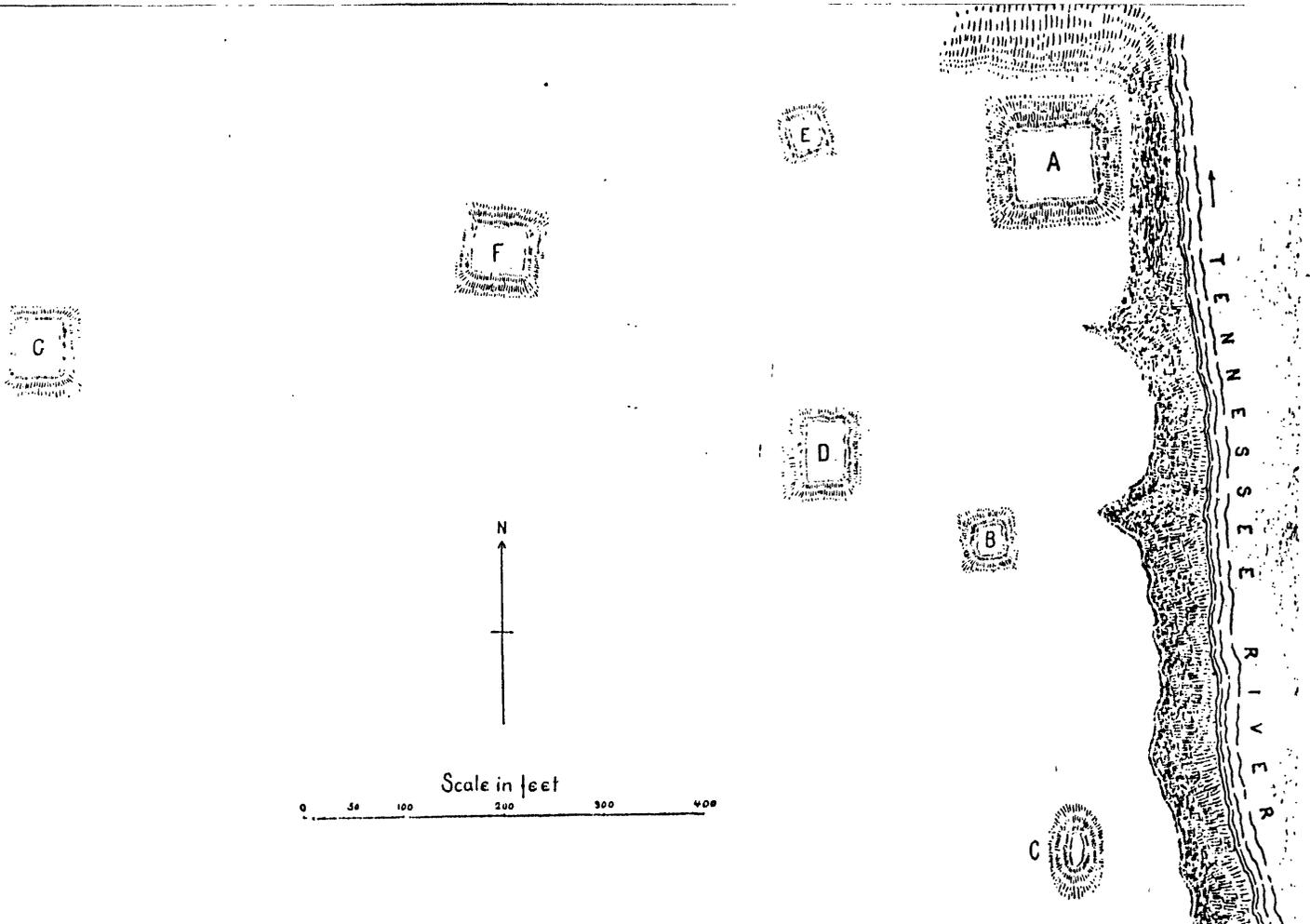


Figure 2. Placement of the major mounds at the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site, as recorded by C. B. Moore (1915:224). Conical shaped Late Woodland Burial Mound C is in the lower left area of the site.

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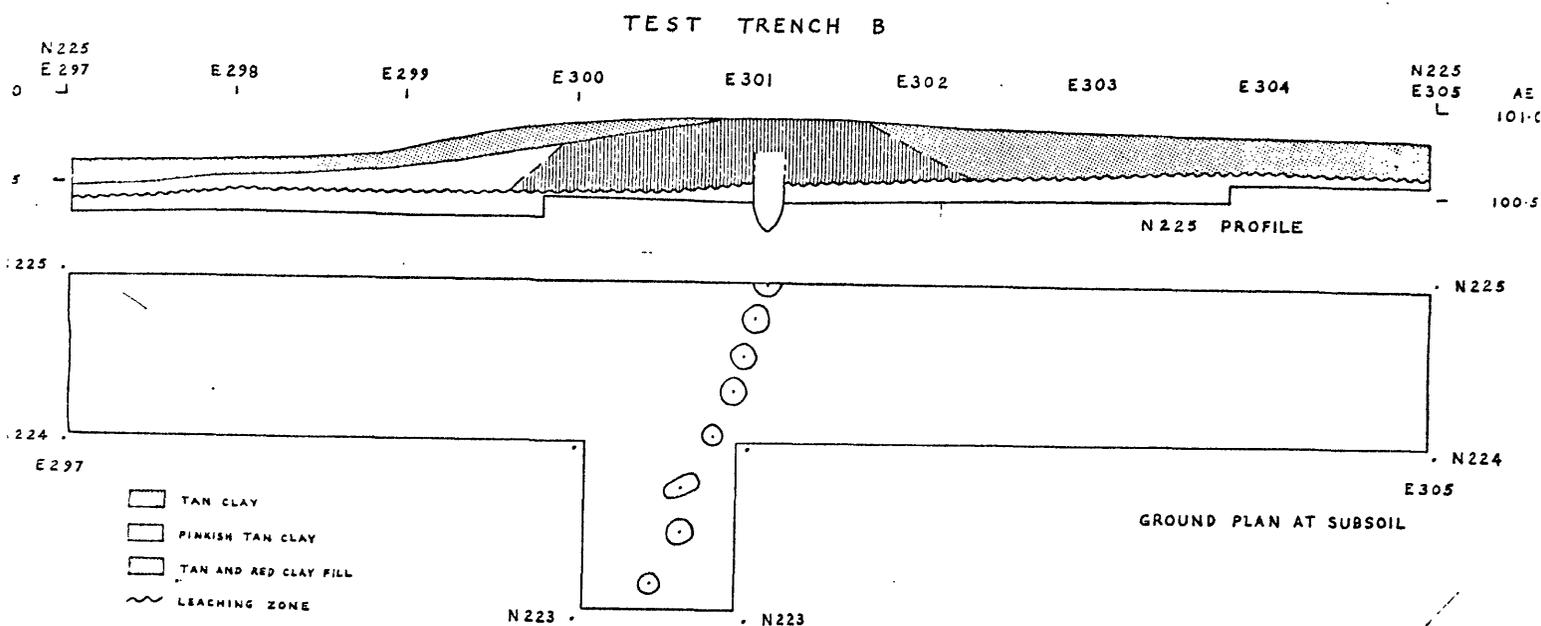


Figure 9. Side and overview of excavation of a portion of the palisade line in the western part of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site (From Smith 1977).

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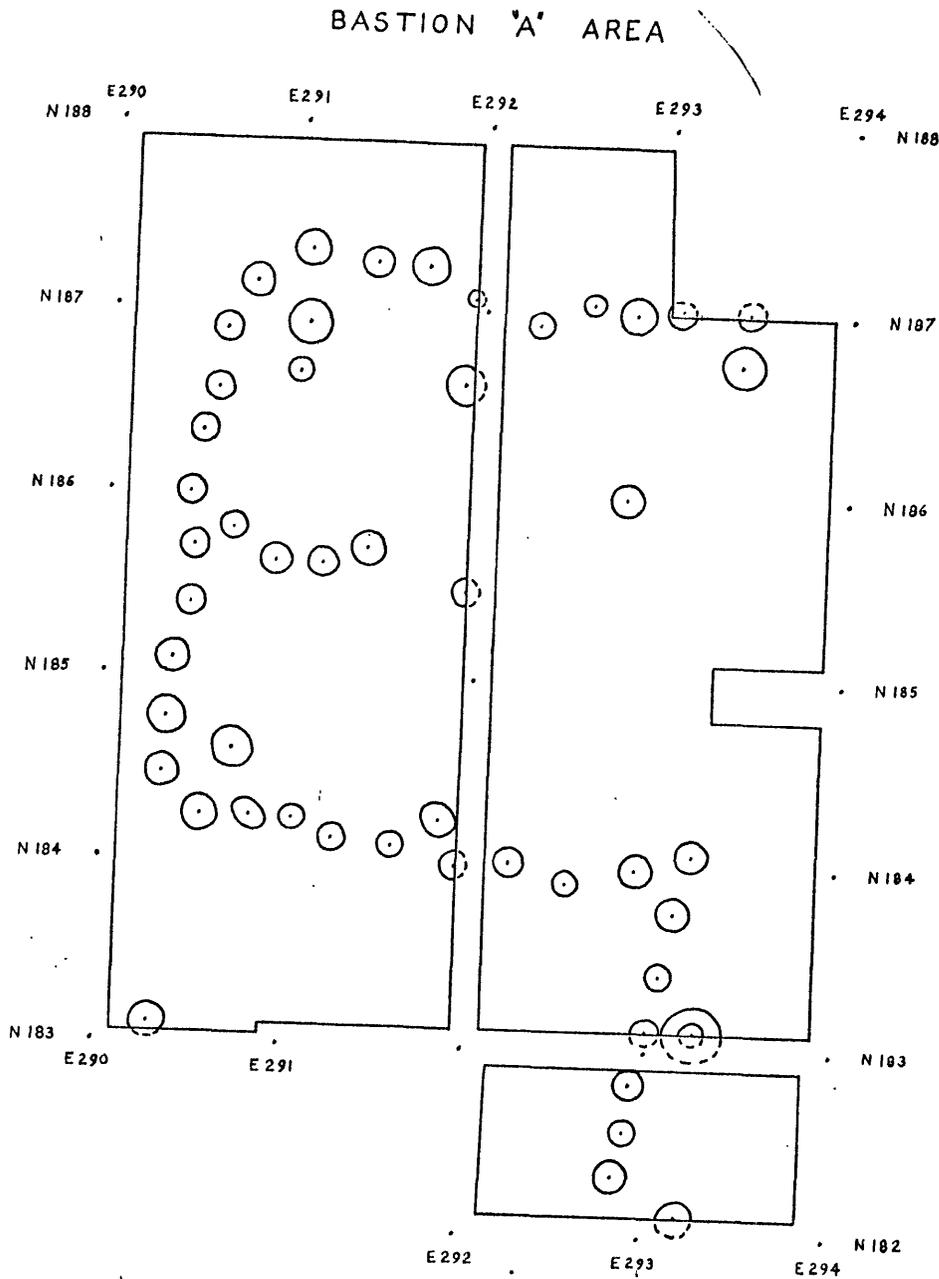
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Figure 10. Shows excavation of one of the square shaped bastions along the western palisade line of the Shiloh Indian Mounds Site (From Smith 1977).



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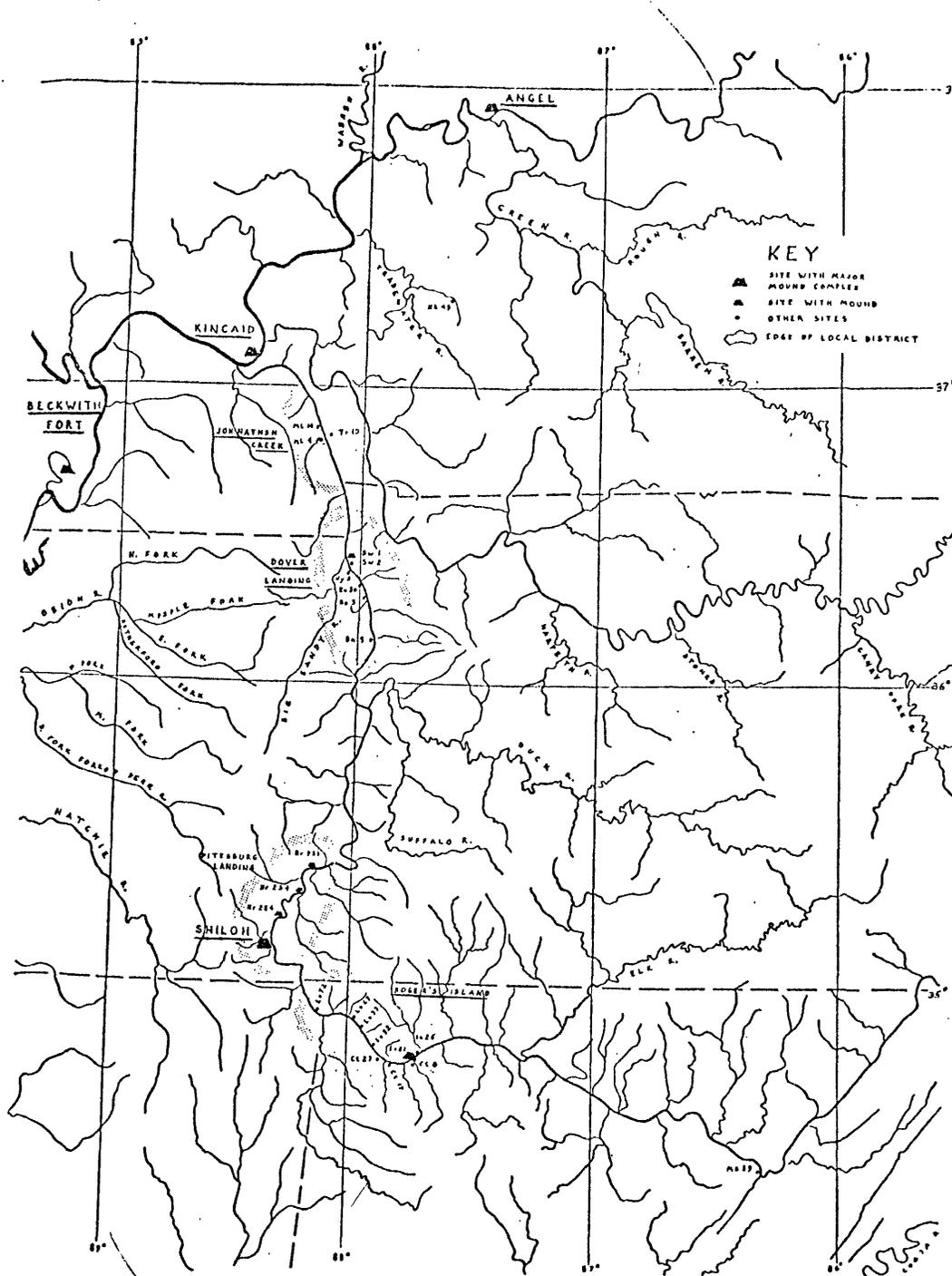
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Figure 11. Shows relationship of Shiloh Indian Mounds Site to other major mound centers in the Tennessee River Valley (From Smith 1977).



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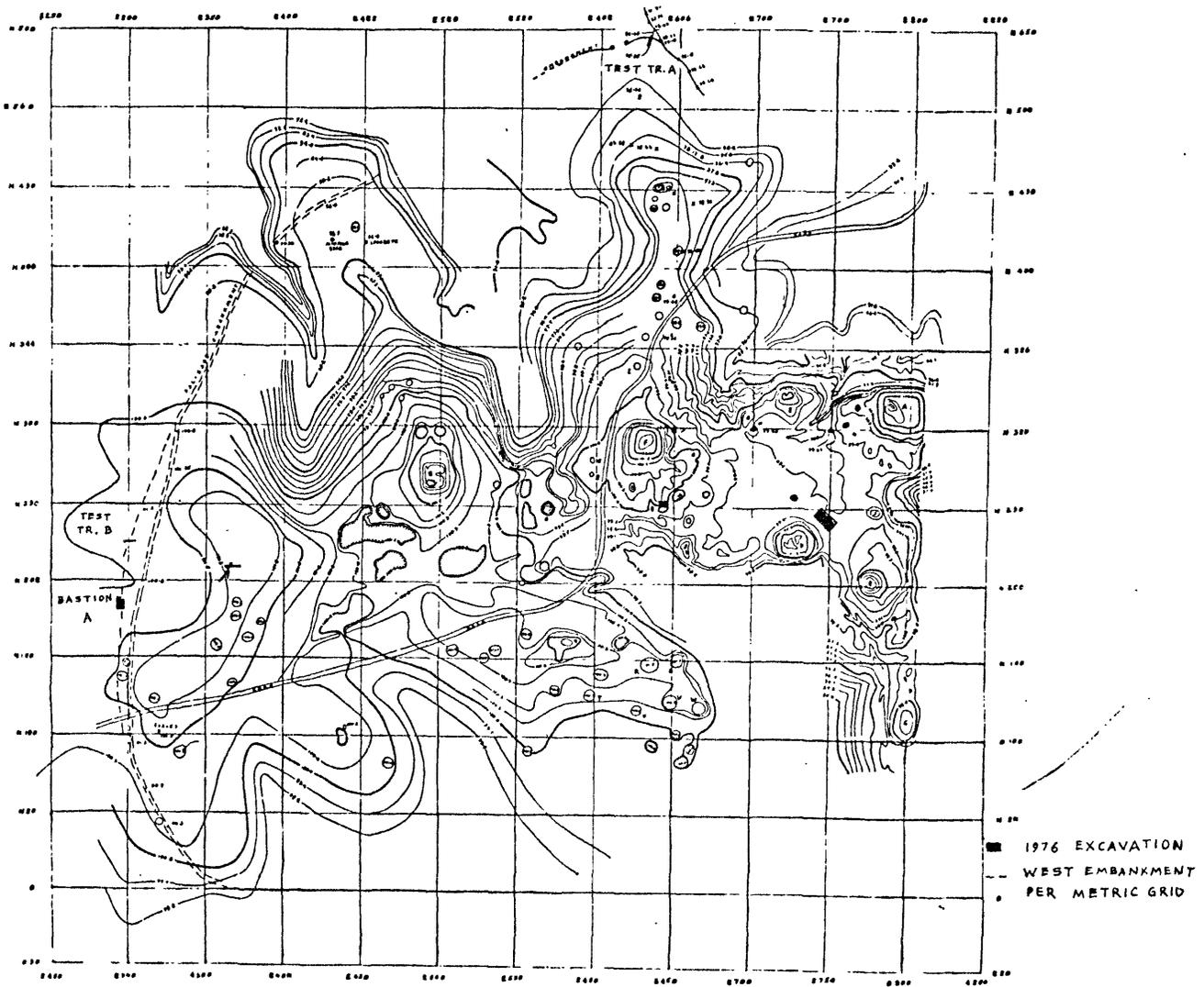


Figure 12. Overview of Shiloh Indian Mounds Site developed from the 1976 Gerald Smith investigations, showing the palisade and embankment line, location of major mounds, and smaller house mounds (From Smith 1977).