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# NEW DEAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN TENNESSEE

Intellectual,  
Methodological,  
and Theoretical  
Contributions



Edited by **DAVID H. DYE**

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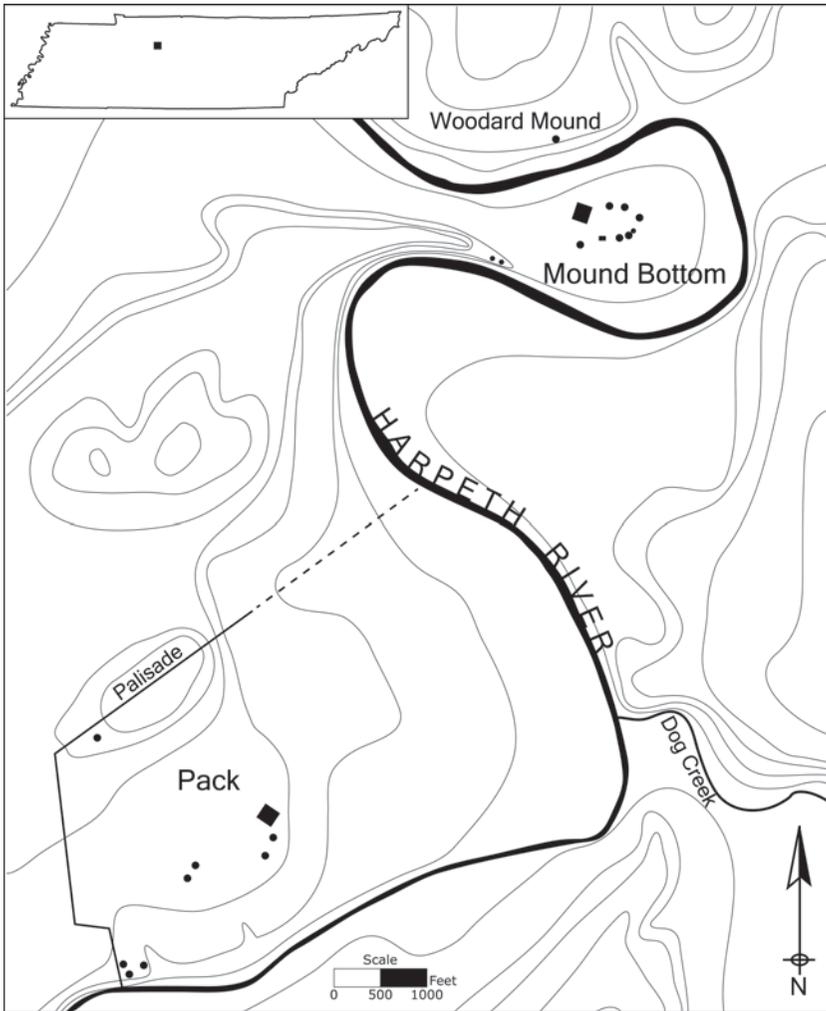
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## WPA Excavations at the Mound Bottom and Pack Sites in Middle Tennessee, 1936–1940

Michael C. Moore, David H. Dye, and Kevin E. Smith

Although the mandate of the Works Progress Administration archaeological program was structured around excavating sites impounded by Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) reservoirs in the Tennessee River valley proper, Thomas M. N. Lewis had more ambitious long-term plans for the newly established University of Tennessee (UT) program (Hawley and Dye, this volume; Smith, this volume). During the course of ongoing TVA reservoir projects, Lewis diverted labor to several additional sites outside the Tennessee Valley with the goal of constructing wayside museums near the larger population centers of Nashville and Memphis. These wayside museums were intended to raise additional funds for the UT archaeology program (Hay 1939; Neumann 1936). This study focuses on the results of one of those side projects at the Mound Bottom and Pack Mound complexes in Cheatham County, Tennessee. These large Mississippian centers, located about 25 km west of downtown Nashville, were established some 1.6 km from each other along the west bank of the meandering Harpeth River roughly 20 km from its confluence with the Cumberland River (Autry 1983; O'Brien 1977; O'Brien and Kuttruff 2012).

At least one early account refers to Mound Bottom and Pack as the Great Mound Group (Myer 1924). Each site displays one large platform mound with smaller platform mounds arranged to form a plaza (Figure 6.1). Mound Bottom includes at least 11 mounds within a severe meander loop of the Harpeth River (Myer 1924). Other research sources put the total between 12 to 14 mounds (Cox 1926; Haywood 1823; Moore and Smith 2009:261; O'Brien and Kuttruff 2012). The large platform mound at Mound Bottom is located along the western plaza edge. At Pack (also known as Osborn's Place), the large mound is found on the eastern end of the plaza, with a total of 20 mounds recorded across the site (Myer 1924). Both complexes had palisades with bastions around their respective site areas, and early accounts describe a trail/road that linked these two centers (Haywood 1823; Jones 1876).



6.1. Map of Mound Bottom and Pack Mound complexes, Cheatham County, Tennessee. (map courtesy of Michael C. Moore, David H. Dye, and Kevin E. Smith).

### Previous Investigations

Lewis's interest in Mound Bottom and Pack was stimulated by a series of earlier explorations beginning in the 1870s. The initial Mound Bottom investigation was conducted by Edwin Curtiss in late May 1878. His work was part of an aggressive exploration campaign sponsored by the Peabody Museum at Harvard University (Moore and Smith 2009). A site map sketched by Curtiss represents the earliest known dia-

gram for Mound Bottom, but ironically the map was not discovered until 120 years later (Moore and Smith 2009:90). Curtiss identified 11 mounds on his sketch map, including the large platform mound noted as 218 feet long, 175 feet wide, and 45 feet high. The large mound immediately to the south was defined as 200 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 15 feet high.

Curtiss excavated roughly 40 stone-box graves over a three-day period but did not include the burial locations on his map. He did note the graves contained poorly preserved skeletal remains. The few items recovered from these burial explorations consist of one biconcave discoidal, some deer bone fragments, and possibly a steatite bowl (Moore and Smith 2009:91–92). Other items recovered at or near the Mound Bottom site comprise a Kaolin chert hypertrophic celt and a greenstone spatulate celt (Moore and Smith 2009:92). Curtiss also investigated a bluff-top burial mound east of Mound Bottom just across the river, where he found a burial containing two wooden ear ornaments coated with copper that strongly resemble milkweed pods (Moore and Smith 2009:91).

Available records suggest the next 45 years were a time of occasional site visits but no organized investigations (Myer 1921; Smith 2008; Stewart 1909; Thruston 1897). This inactive period ended in the spring of 1923 when William E. Myer, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, arranged for aerial photography and detailed engineering maps for both Mound Bottom and Pack. Lieutenant Norman McEwan of the Tennessee Air National Guard created the aerial photographs, and Crawford C. Anderson with the U.S. Geological Survey generated the site maps. The Mound Bottom map illustrated 11 major mounds, 10 “house sites,” and two additional bluff-top mounds. Anderson’s map of the Pack site denoted some 20 mounds and 42 houses.

Myer also conducted excavations at the Pack site that focused upon several mounds and structures (Myer 1924). His untimely death in December 1923 left most of that research unpublished. Recent examinations of the available site records have brought to light select details of Myer’s work that focused on three areas: (1) Mound 2; (2) a “council house”; and (3) an “earth lodge circle” (Moore et al. 2008). Myer cut a trench through Mound 2, a large platform mound located south of the primary platform mound (Mound 1) on the eastern site edge. At least one structure was defined on the mound summit. The trench penetrated to the mound base and exposed perhaps three construction stages. The mound fill was described as devoid of artifacts.

A large rectangular structure defined as “Beckham’s Council House” was exposed on the southwestern periphery of Myer’s “Plaza Y” near the site interior. This structure had obviously burned. Fragments of charred wall posts were still visible and woven cane-matting wall hangings were discovered under the fallen walls. Beneath the wall debris was a glossy black fired clay floor. Little is known about the third focus area, other than that it was described as an “earth lodge circle” at the edge of Ganier Point overlooking the Harpeth River along the southwestern site boundary. The available notes suggest this “earth lodge” was a more typical residential structure.

Parmenio Edward Cox, appointed Tennessee's first state archaeologist by Governor Austin Peay in 1924, conducted nearly a month of fieldwork at Mound Bottom in 1926 (Autry 1983; Cox 1926). Cox's original reference to fieldwork conducted during February and March was in error (Cox 1926), as available records indicate the fieldwork was initiated on March 19 and concluded on April 16 (Autry 1983). Cox used two to six men during this work, although he himself suffered from illness over the course of investigation. Cox's chronic illness likely contributed to his death on October 25, 1932. His excavation results were not published, but the field notes were minimally preserved following his death (Whitley 1933). The most important contribution from this project was arguably the commission of a detailed site map by Claire Cole Fisher.

Cox stated that he opened 86 stone-box graves during his Mound Bottom exploration (Cox 1926). The available records suggest a more accurate assessment to be 70 stone-box graves excavated in six separate clusters across the site (Autry 1983). Whatever the number, some graves had been previously dug, most likely by Curtiss in 1878. Cox noted most graves contained adults placed in an extended position, with one child and eight infant burials also present. Fewer than 10 graves held associated burial artifacts that included two "ear bobs," several pottery vessels, and a pipe.

In addition to the burial removals, Cox examined at least nine mounds through a combination of augers, pits, and trenches (Cox 1926; Whitley 1933). Conclusive results from these efforts are difficult to ascertain, as Cox was more skilled in promoting sites than digging them. However, an argument has been made that the discovery of a layer of burned gravel, sand, and timbers over a hard surface in Mound C (southeastern corner of the plaza) represents the unrecognized remains of a charnel structure (Autry 1983:54). Cox's dimensions for the large platform mound (265 feet long, 156 wide, 25 feet high) substantially vary from those noted by Curtiss roughly 50 years earlier. Although agricultural activities and erosion may account for some of the difference, the measurements noted by Curtiss are believed to be more accurate since he was a railroad contractor by profession, as opposed to Cox, who was trained as a lawyer.

### The WPA Excavations

The seed for WPA work at Mound Bottom and Pack was planted late in December 1933 with the arrival of Thomas M. N. Lewis at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Lewis had been hired by William S. Webb, supervising archaeologist for the Tennessee Valley Authority, as the field supervisor of the Norris Basin excavations in late December 1933. Shortly following the conclusion of the Norris Basin investigations on July 1, 1934, Webb appealed to the University of Tennessee to continue a program of archaeological research in the state. Despite financial difficulties at the time, the university established the Division of Anthropology under the De-

partment of History on September 1, 1934, and named Lewis as director (Lewis et al. 1995; Lyon 1996).

Lewis began UT's Chickamauga Basin excavations in June 1936 under a cooperative program with the WPA and TVA. By late 1937, a long-term feud that had been festering between Lewis and Webb began to erupt (Dye 2013). The rift was apparently more than just a personal clash, as these two men seemed to hold opposing views on pretty much anything having to do with archaeology (Fagette 1996:108; Lyon 1996:144). Interestingly, within a year or so of arriving in Tennessee, Lewis had managed to sever ties with Webb and take control of all federally funded archaeological research in Tennessee.

From July 1936 to February 1937, investigations at Mound Bottom and Pack were conducted during the course of the Chickamauga Basin project. Lewis intended the work at Mound Bottom and Pack to lead to the development of a state park and way-side museum near the main highway (U.S. 70) that connected Memphis and Nashville. Profits would go toward building an archaeology program at the University of Tennessee (Lyon 1996:145). Unfortunately, the diversion of WPA labor to these sites merely contributed to the ongoing feud between Lewis and Webb, as well as with T. Levron Howard of the TVA's Social and Economic Research Division. Lewis's vision for a park and a museum was ultimately unsuccessful, although an argument could be made that his work set the stage for the state to purchase the Mound Bottom site in 1973. Charles Nash eventually created such an archaeological park some 20 years later when he established Chucalissa Indian Village in 1956 in south Memphis.

### Pack Site Excavations

Lewis initiated preparations for the Pack (and Mound Bottom) site excavations to start July 1, 1936. Field supervisors O. C. Ogle, Charles H. Nash, and Georg K. Neumann moved their base of operations from the Link Farm site on the Duck River in Humphreys County (completed in May) to the Pack site to set up the field headquarters. Lewis remained in Knoxville for much of this time to plan the new work as well as to manage the ongoing excavations in the Chickamauga Basin with Charles H. Fairbanks, Jesse D. Jennings, and Robert S. Neitzel supervising the various field crews. Lewis and Nash established the grid system and numbering procedures based on Lewis's previous work at the Duck River sites and his work with Webb in Norris Basin. Nash contributed his 1935 University of Chicago summer field school experience at the Kincaid site (Howe, this volume). Nash (1935) had written to Lewis the previous year that his "field experience and handling of men has been extensive enough so that the problems of the field are thoroughly familiar" to him and that he had "a good knowledge of Mississippi [Period] archaeology, as well as methods of excavation of burial or (and) structure mounds." From the Chicago field school, he had gained experience at plane-table surveying and topography mapping.

Pack was designated Ch1, as it was the first recorded site in Cheatham County. The site area was divided into various subunits, including mounds, a plaza, and village areas. The large platform mound was numbered 1Ch1, and the two mounds to the south were designated 2Ch1 and 3Ch1. The village area was assigned as 4Ch1.

The Pack site excavations began on July 1, 1936, and continued for seven months. The project closed in early February 1937. Nash and Neumann were in charge of fieldwork until the end of November 1936. Robert S. Neitzel arrived in early December to take over supervision of the fieldwork and remained in charge until the project ended. Fieldwork focused on four mounds, three “house mounds,” several village areas, and a segment of the palisade. Summary descriptions of the subunits will be presented in the order they were excavated (Figure 6.2).

Nash and Neumann had initially planned to begin the Pack exploration at Mound 3 (3Ch1), but they ended up choosing the less eroded Mound 2 (2Ch1). This decision, apparently made at the last minute, was based on the fact that Myer’s 1923 work included a trench into Mound 3. Nash and Neumann thought the damage from the trench was sufficiently severe to have destroyed any burials and structures that might have been present (this statement suggests the WPA “Mound 3” is likely Myer’s “Mound 2” that was trenched). Mound 2, deemed to have the greater potential, was excavated from early July through late October 1936 (Figure 6.3). The investigation utilized 10 ft. by 10 ft. excavation units and a series of trenches to uncover four floor levels of one substructure mound; and also define a primary, secondary, and tertiary mound that partially overlapped. One of the structure floors (Feature 3) in Mound 2 yielded a burial pit (Feature 4) containing the cremated remains of an adult. The Mound 2 excavations also uncovered evidence of a structure, based on the discovery of hearths and floor sections, that existed before the mound was built. This particular locale was designated Unit 4 (4Ch1) and was interpreted as an old village surface.

Sporadic excavation of a terrace area on the eastern site edge (7Ch1) was conducted by Neumann between late August and mid-October 1936. Neitzel performed additional explorations of this unit in January 1937. The Unit 7 work identified the locale to be part of a mound, but further unit evaluation was suspended due to the upcoming termination of the project.

A short segment of the palisade line along the northern site boundary, designated Unit 80 (80Ch1), was excavated by Neumann in September 1936. Fourteen postholes were exposed near the outside of the palisade embankment. These postholes measured roughly 20 cm in diameter and were centered about 40 cm apart. There was no positive evidence for a palisade trench. Neitzel returned to the palisade in January 1937 to excavate a bastion and another short section of the line. His work was not conclusive regarding the bastion construction but did expose a trench that was presumably associated with the bastion. As was the case with Unit 7, additional work on the palisade was discontinued due to the approaching end to the project.

Three “house mounds” (Units 13, 14, and 15) were examined in October and



6.2. WPA excavation units at the Pack site (40CH1) (adapted from Myer 1924:Figure 108).



6.3. WPA excavation grid system with Mound 2 in the foreground, Pack site (40CH1) (photograph nos. WPA 41ChH1, digital fhm00441, 1936, photo courtesy of the McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture, University of Tennessee).

November 1936. Excavations were generally conducted in three-inch (7.5 cm) levels. Unit 13 (13Ch1) comprised a mound about four feet high located in the south site area. The exploration uncovered a rather square, 24.3 feet (7.4 meters) by 20.7 feet (6.3 meters), wall-trench structure with rounded corners and a central puddled-clay hearth. Artifacts reported with this structure include ceramics, a mushroom-style pottery trowel, and a pipe.

Unit 14 (14Ch1), located southwest of Unit 13, was similar in height to Unit 13 but also displayed a central depression. The investigations recorded a square wall trench structure, 23.5 feet (7.1 meters) by 21.8 feet (6.6 meters), with a central hearth. Unlike Unit 13, the Unit 14 structure displayed open corners as well as a break in the trench near the southeast corner.

Not much information is available for Unit 15 (15Ch1). This unit was excavated between early to mid-November 1936. Obviously a structure was exposed, as artifacts reported from the structure floor include pottery, two chisels, and two worked stones.

Unit 20 (20Ch1) comprised a platform mound on the west side of the plaza. Excavations between early December 1936 and mid-January 1937 uncovered a number of structures. The north mound area yielded a wall-trench structure (Feature 1) with a prepared clay floor and central hearth. The structure walls measured roughly 23 feet (7.0 meters) in length, and overlapped with (at least) two single-post structures (designated Features 3 and 11). Only a portion of Feature 3 was present, but

Feature 11 represented a complete, somewhat square structure that measured 23 feet (7.0 meters) by 19.5 feet (5.9 meters) in size. A stone blade was associated with this particular structure.

Part of a large rectangular wall-trench structure was exposed within the south mound area of Unit 20 (20Ch1). This structure, designated Feature 2, had a burned clay floor and measured 47 feet (14.2 meters) along the northeast wall and 31 feet (9.4 meters) along the southeast wall. Two, and possibly three, separate hearths were recorded within this Unit 20 structure. One hearth (Feature 8) was near the structure center. Another hearth (Feature 4) was closer to the northwest corner and filled with burned clay (likely from collapse of a wall and/or roof). Two pits (Features 5 and 6) discovered within this structure contained charred corn cobs.

Clearing brush and vegetation from the primary platform mound (1Ch1) was initiated at the beginning of the Pack site project. However, excavation of Unit 1 did not begin until January 1937. Several trenches were opened, but wet and cold weather hampered the excavation progress. Three structure floors (Features 1, 2, and 3) were defined during the work. One other structure was reported in a trench along the mound's south side near the base. Whether or not this structure represents a pre-mound structure or a separate mound-related structure floor remains uncertain at this time. A severely disturbed stone-box burial (Feature 4) was reported in the mound. This child's grave yielded no skeletal remains and was determined to be an intrusive mound feature. Interestingly, the grave stones were made of shale, denoted as slate in the field notes, rather than limestone.

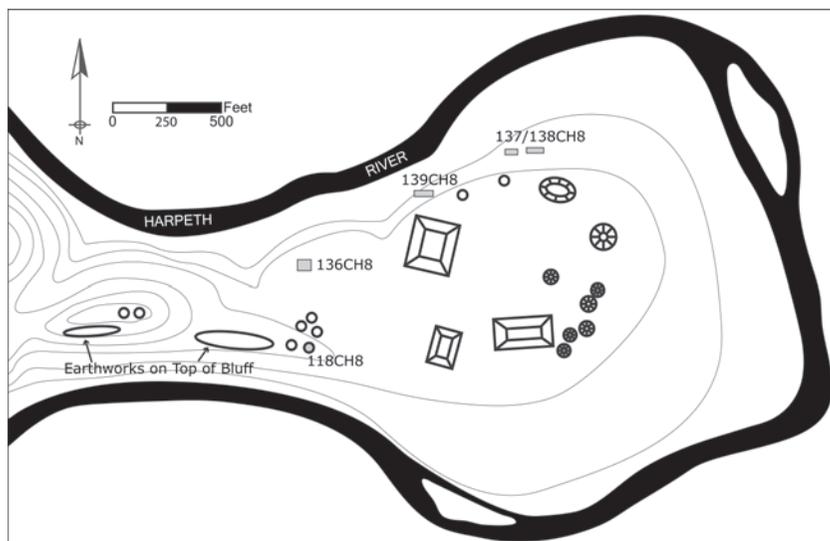
## Mound Bottom Excavations

The excavations at Mound Bottom took place in 1936–1937 and again in 1940, focusing exclusively on stone-box cemeteries (Figure 6.4). As will be discussed, a select number of graves exposed during these investigations was apparently explored by Cox and/or Curtiss years before.

### Neitzel's December 1936 to January 1937 Excavations

Robert S. Neitzel worked at Mound Bottom, designated Ch8, from early December 1936 to early January 1937 in a stone-box cemetery (Unit 136Ch8) located west of the primary platform mound. He had excavated 34 burials by the time his work concluded on January 11, 1937. Of interest is that 14 of these graves were empty and were likely excavated by Cox in 1926 and possibly even earlier by Curtiss in 1878.

A previous analysis of the available physical remains from Unit 136Ch8 (including Cox 1926) defined five males and 12 females (Autry 1983:83). The ages of individuals within this assemblage included 15 adults, two children, two juveniles, and four infants. Four of the 1926 burials included grave goods, including a probable adult with



6.4. WPA excavation units at Mound Bottom (40Ch8) (adapted from Myer 1924: Figure 109).

a round stone ball and a probable adult with ceramic sherds and what might be two shale ear ornaments. Seven of the 1936–1937 graves contained mortuary inclusions, including: (1) an adult female with a Bell Plain cylindrical-neck bottle, a shell spoon, and a stone effigy pipe; (2) an adult male with a small perforated shell disk; (3) an adult with four small projectile points; (4) a probable male with a small Mississippi Plain loop-handle jar; and (5) an infant with small flat shell beads. Two burials held copper objects (Autry 1983:83–88). One mature male (136Ch10) had a pair of copper-coated wooden artifacts at each mastoid and exhibited cosmetic dental modification (Autry 1991). An adult female (136Ch14) was buried with two large shale earspools and displayed copper staining on one rib. An updated analysis of the human skeletal remains from 136Ch8 (as well as the 1940 Nash investigations) is presented by Worne, Vidoli, and Steadman in chapter 8.

#### Nash's February 1940 Excavations

Lewis sent Nash back to Mound Bottom in February 1940. Neitzel's previous work in 1936–1937 had convinced Nash that Cox had discovered only a small percentage of the burials within his excavation areas. The weather conditions were terrible: "Rain and impossible working conditions are making it very difficult to complete the work here on anything like a schedule, however some 70 graves have been worked out" (Nash 1940). He noted that Cox had found a mass of thatch some three to four feet below the top of the large mound. Nash excavated four cemetery "units" (118Ch8, 137Ch8, 138Ch8, and 139Ch8) across the west and north site areas. Unit 118Ch8 is

the only definitively located unit based on available map information (Autry 1983:60). The other three unit locations were identified by correlating the Cox 1926 records with correspondence between Lewis and Nash that is currently archived at the University of Tennessee's McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture.

Unit 118Ch8 was a mound along a low ridge toe southwest of the primary platform mound. Nash found 27 stone-box graves, four of which had been previously excavated by Cox or Curtiss. Nash also exposed a shaft in the mound center likely dug by Cox. Autry's 1983 analysis of the burials excavated by Nash identified 16 adults, one juvenile, one infant, and 19 unknown individuals (Autry 1983:88–91). Only five of the Nash burials contained mortuary goods, including: (1) an unidentified adult with a stone discoidal; (2) an adult male with a stone discoidal; (3) an adult male with a "ceremonial" knife, beads, and red ochre; and (4) a probable adult with a Bell Plain cylindrical-neck bottle.

Unit 137Ch8 was likely located in the low-lying area along the northern site boundary. Twenty-one graves were excavated by Nash, but eight held no skeletal remains and were probably opened by Cox or Curtiss. Preservation of the skeletal elements was generally poor due to wet soils and previous agricultural activity. Four burials held associated grave objects, including a Mississippi Plain beaker-like vessel and a large Bell Plain blank-face hooded bottle in stone-box grave 137Ch15, a small Mississippi Plain jar with a probable child from stone-box grave 137Ch18, and a small Bell Plain jar with a possible adult male from stone-box grave 137Ch19.

The third unit dug by Nash (138Ch8) was adjacent to the previously mentioned 137Ch8. This unit yielded eight stone-box graves and two pit burials. Five stone-box graves were empty and likely dug by Cox. As noted, preservation was poor due to frequent inundation and plowing within this area of the site. No grave goods were recovered from this unit.

Nash's last unit, 139Ch8, is thought to be located immediately north of the primary platform mound. Sixteen stone-box burials were exposed in this unit, but 10 graves yielded no bone. However, these 10 graves still retained their capstones, so the lack of bone appears due to poor preservation from frequent inundation rather than removal by previous explorations. Just one grave, 139CH6, yielded associated artifacts, an individual of indeterminate age and sex buried with three steatite rings (earspools).

Nash ran a shallow trench into the northern most of the "double mounds" (perhaps Tennessee Division of Archaeology Mound D) and encountered burnt clay half-way up the side. He thought the burned clay, perhaps a floor, represented a structure located low in the mound. The mound appeared to Nash to be in the process of gradually being plowed away. Nash received word from Lewis on February 20 that he was to leave Mound Bottom for Paris, Tennessee, on or about March 16 and to bring the trailer and equipment. Upon Nash's arrival in Paris, George Lidberg was to leave for Memphis the next day to begin explorations of the T. O. Fuller Mounds, now known as Chucalissa.

## Other WPA Site Explorations

WPA explorations of other Mississippian mounds and cemeteries in the general study area were conducted during this period by the University of Tennessee. Excavations conducted during the course of the 1936 to 1937 Mound Bottom and Pack investigations include the Woodard Mound, along with the Buchi and Herman sites.

The Woodard site consisted of a Mississippian mound (designated 105Ch3) located across the Harpeth River on a ridge top just north of Mound Bottom. This relatively circular earthwork measured approximately 50 feet in diameter with an unknown height. Investigations were conducted by Georg Neumann and Lewis in mid-September 1936. A five-foot (1.5 meter) north-south trench was cut just west of the mound center. This initial cut was expanded to expose a roughly 625-square-foot area. Sixteen stone-box graves were defined in the expanded area. Only the first five burial forms are available in the files, but the burials appear to have comprised eight adults, seven children, and one infant, based upon the relative grave sizes depicted on the excavation plan map. No associated funerary goods were reported from any of the burials, although three of the stone-boxes had been previously dug.

Buchi and Herman comprise Mississippian sites within an unnamed meander bend of the Harpeth River in extreme southwest Davidson County roughly 20 km upstream from Mound Bottom and Pack. Site explorations by Lewis and Neumann were initiated on September 11, 1936, and continued into November 1936. This work was intended to secure skeletal remains that could be exhibited at a museum to be built at the Mound Bottom-Pack Mound locality.

Buchi (designated 1Dv1) represents a Mississippian stone-box cemetery located along a high bluff of the Harpeth River, and overlooks the Herman site that was established on a Harpeth River terrace. Seven stone-box graves were reported as removed from the Buchi site, but the site plan map illustrates nine graves (Smith 1972:3). All burials were single interments consisting of three adult males, two adult females, one juvenile male, and one infant. Several graves had been previously disturbed, including one just days before Neumann's visit. The juvenile male yielded associated grave objects: a small ceramic bowl containing red ocher and turtle carapace fragments. None of these grave artifacts was available for analysis.

The Herman site (designated 2Dv2) consists of a stone-box cemetery and probable small village established on a long, narrow terrace that extends northeasterly into the bend. Twenty-six graves were reported as exposed by construction activity along the terrace, but the site area may have originally contained about twice that many (Smith 1972:2). Individuals removed during the exploration included six adult males, six adult females, two children, and six infants.

Available records indicate that eight of the 26 graves held associated grave goods, including all but one of the child/infant graves. One peculiar item recovered from Burial 25 (infant) was a small, circular embossed copper sheet initially defined as a

Table 6.1. Ceramics from WPA excavations at the Herman site

Provenience	Mississippi Plain	Bell Plain	Negative Painted
FS 1 with 2D1	2	0	0
FS 2	3	1	0
FS 5/Trench 1	15	1	0
FS 5/2DV2	1	0	0
FS 11	1	2	1
FS 12	1	0	0
FS 13	4	0	0
FS 14	31	1	0
FS 15	12	0	0
FS 16 with D14	9	0	0
FS 17	6	1	0
FS 21	9	0	0
FS 23 with D18	14	0	0
FS 24 with 2D19	9	0	0
FS 28 with 2D20	2	0	0
FS 37 with 2DV26	45	0	0
FS 38	36	0	0
FS 38/2DV2	1	0	0
2DV29	2	0	0
H12	21	0	0
TOTALS	224	6	1

“copper gorget” but is actually an earspool veneer. This specimen is thin (0.37 mm) and has 31 small nodes along the outer edge with a concentric circle surrounding a raised center. Also found was a small marine shell gorget (possibly the “shell pendant” from Grave 24, infant) that displayed four equidistant lobes along the exterior surface with a cross and circle design in the center. Also found in Grave 24 was a small but mostly complete marine shell (whelk). Additional nonceramic grave artifacts include marine shell beads and an exceptionally small marine shell earplug from Burial 12 (adult female); marine shell beads and an elk astragalus cube from Burial 20 (infant); and marine shell beads from Burial 25 (infant).

The modest Herman pottery assemblage ( $n = 231$ ) presented in Table 6.1 comprised mostly Mississippi Plain sherds ( $n = 224$ ; 97 percent) with a few Bell Plain ( $n = 6$ ; 2 percent) and negative painted ( $n = 1$ ; <1 percent) specimens. Rim sherds from the Mississippi Plain sample derived from jars with direct rims and flat to folded lips. One jar rim had a single lug. A flattened loop handle fragment was also present. No complete vessels were reported with the interred individuals.

### Post-WPA Explorations at Mound Bottom

Mound Bottom was purchased by the State of Tennessee in 1973. The Tennessee Division of Archaeology (TDOA) initiated archaeological investigations during the

summer of 1974 and returned for another field session through the summer and fall of 1975 (O'Brien and Kuttruff 2012). Fourteen mounds (Mounds A-N) were mapped during this exploration. There is some potential for confusion when using this map to evaluate the 1926 Cox excavations due to different mound labels. For example, the 1926 Fisher map uses "Temple Mound" to label the large western platform mound, whereas the TDOA map defined this particular earthwork as Mound A. The mound designated "Mound A" by Cox is actually Mound B in the TDOA system. This difference in mound designations continues in a counterclockwise manner at least through Mound G on the 1926 Fisher map (deemed Mound H on the TDOA map). The TDOA map also included two small mounds (Mounds M and N) previously undefined on the 1923 Anderson and 1926 Fisher versions. These newly defined mounds occur directly east of the earthworks (TDOA Mounds E, F, and G) forming the eastern plaza enclosure (O'Brien and Kuttruff 2012:72).

Fieldwork focused on six of these mounds, including the large platform mound (Mound A) as well as an adjacent conical mound to the south (Mound B) and an adjacent rectangular mound to the northeast (Mound J). Mound A was described as about 75 meters (247 feet) long on each side of the base, and 11 meters (36 feet) tall. An approximate 1 x 3-meter unit dug along the west base of Mound A defined at least four distinct construction stages. Stage II returned a date of cal. A.D. 976 +/- 48 (DIC-617), and the subsequent Stage III yielded a date of cal. A.D. 1144 +/- 97 (DIC-624). Mound B was initially thought to be a burial mound due to its conical shape. However, a 2-meter by 2-meter unit dug south of the mound summit uncovered five construction stages with no evidence for burials or structural features. The purpose of this mound remains unknown. Excavations conducted on and around Mound J revealed two construction stages as well as large wall-trenches. Charcoal recovered from a basin built into the initial mound stage yielded a date of cal. A.D. 934 +/- 58 (DIC-615).

TDOA excavations of select off-mound locales were also performed based upon the results of a controlled surface collection (O'Brien 1977; O'Brien and Kuttruff 2012). These investigations exposed numerous wall-trench structures with open corners and walls averaging four meters in length. Several single-post structures were also uncovered, including one possible special purpose structure (Structure 11) that yielded a date of cal. A.D. 1353 +/- 47 (DIC-623).

## Discussion

WPA-era excavations at the Pack site were different in both methodology and scope from those employed at Mound Bottom. Although perhaps not intentional at the beginning, the Pack project concentrated exclusively on nonmortuary earthworks including house and platform mounds. Trenches and unit excavations were employed to document mound construction stages and structure plan-views. However, the Mound Bottom work, during both 1936-1937 and 1940, focused exclusively on the explo-

ration of stone-box grave cemeteries. This methodology followed in the footsteps of the 1878 Curtiss investigation. The 1926 Cox explorations, while focused on burial removals, included misguided attempts to evaluate the internal stratigraphy of most visible mounds. Nonmortuary aspects of Mound Bottom were not properly evaluated until the 1974–1975 TDOA work (O'Brien and Kuttruff 2012).

WPA work on the palisade section at Pack (Unit 8o) yielded palisade trench and post dimensions that closely compare with palisades recorded at other Mississippian sites across the Nashville Basin. Current research results at these sites suggest that palisades are a relatively late addition to site plans. This change starts around A.D. 1325, as populations began to shift from living in dispersed smaller sites under a central authority (central towns with platform mounds) to congregating in larger nucleated villages and towns that were fortified with substantial palisades and bastions (Moore and Smith 2009; Moore et al. 2006; Smith 1992).

Also, virtually all the Pack site structures investigated in 1936–1937 were wall-trench construction (Units 2, 13, 14, 20). These documented discoveries support the assertion that the majority of the “house mounds” mapped in 1923 and 1936 likely contain the remnants of these types of structures. The 1974–1975 TDOA work at Mound Bottom also recorded mostly wall-trench structures and a few single-post structures. Interestingly, the previously mentioned population and settlement shift seems to be accompanied by a change in residential architecture. Wall-trench architecture, predominate during the earlier Mississippian period, seems to be replaced by mostly single-post construction around A.D. 1325 (Moore and Smith 2009:210).

Relatively few artifacts were recovered from the WPA Pack site investigations. An analysis of the available ceramics defined an assemblage of primarily Mississippi Plain sherds along with smaller amounts of Bell Plain, Kimmswick Fabric Impressed, and Kimmswick Plain (Table 6.2). This review revealed a modest assemblage of simple jars with folded and/or thickened lips. No handles or appendages were observed, although two rims are dimpled. Several poorly preserved fabric-impressed pans are also present, along with a red slipped bowl rim and a possible funnel fragment. Generally, these specimens are, indeed, “crude” as characterized by investigators from both the 1920s and 1930s. An exception is the Bell Plain cylindrical-neck bottle rim from Mound 2. Overall, the ceramic assemblage suggests a time range of ca. A.D. 1050–1200 (Moore and Smith 2009; Smith and Moore 2010). Several cordmarked sherds with grit/limestone temper that were recovered from the general village area attest to an earlier, yet poorly defined, site occupation.

The 1936–1937 and 1940 WPA explorations at Mound Bottom yielded a somewhat more substantial ceramic assemblage ( $n = 661$ ) that generally corresponds with the ephemeral Pack sample (Table 6.3). Complete vessels recovered from stone-box graves across the site, particularly the cylindrical-neck bottles and loop-handle jar, comprise early forms dating roughly from A.D. 1100–1250. The blank-face hooded bottle and beaker-like vessel recovered from stone-box grave 137CH15 likely date

Table 6.2. Ceramics from WPA excavations at the Pack site

Provenience	Miss Plain	Bell Plain	Kimms		Kimms Plain	Red Slip		Unid Incis	Trowel	Cordmark	
			Fabric Impress	Plain		Interior	Grit Temp			No Temp	
83CH1, FS-1(123)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
20CH1, FS 9	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
4-A CH1, FS 24	5	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
4CH1 (E26 S28)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4CH1 (FS 6)	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
4CH1 (FS 5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
13CH1 (FS 3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
4CH1-B (FS 3)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2CH1 (FS 1)	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3CH1 (FS2)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40CH1 (FS 4)	81	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	100	4	4	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	1

Table 6.3. Ceramics from WPA excavations at Mound Bottom site

Provenience	Miss		Bell		Kimms		Kimms		Neg Paint		Incised		Disk		Plain	
	Plain		Plain		Fabric	Impress	Plain									
FS 1	1		0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FS 5 (Pit 1)	33		2			0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
118CH8 (118CH17, FS 5)	0		1*			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
118CH8 (FS 6)	1*		1*			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
136CH8 (1)	1*		0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
136CH8 (FS 7)	0		1			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
136CH8, FS 16	0		1*			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
137CH8 (2/137-CH8)	133		40			3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
137CH8 (3/137-CH8)	81		13			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
137CH8 (4/137-CH8)	238		38			5	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
137CH8 (Pit 2, FS 6)	15		0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
137CH8 (Pit 3, FS 8)	21		18			1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
137CH13 (137CH8, FS 9)	1*		0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
137CH15 (137CH8, FS 12)	1*		0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
137CH15 (137CH8, FS 13)	0		1*			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
137CH18 (Sq3R3, FS 10)	1*		0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
137CH19 (Sq3R4, FS 11)	0		1*			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	527		117			9	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

\* whole/partial vessel

more toward the end of this early period. General sherd samples recovered from the various excavations units consist of primarily Mississippi Plain jar specimens along with a small percentage of Bell Plain and Kimmswick Plain fragments. These items are not necessarily time sensitive, but the presence of loop/flattened loop handles (and the corresponding absence of strap handles) support the previously noted early time frame.

Continuing re-evaluation of the substantial ceramic assemblage from the 1974 to 1975 TDOA excavations confirms that primary occupation of Mound Bottom began about A.D. 1100 and terminated prior to A.D. 1300 (Smith and Moore 2010). The presence of substantial numbers of jars exhibiting loop handles and lesser quantities displaying narrow intermediate loop handles supports this primary occupation range. Vessel forms, including the cylindrical-neck bottles previously noted for WPA investigations, also conform to this time period. A singular example of a Cahokia Cord-marked jar from midden overlying House 22/23 conforms to those produced during the Moorehead phase in the American Bottom (ca. A.D. 1200–1250). In addition, despite large-scale surface collections and excavations, common ceramic horizon markers for post-A.D. 1325 regional assemblages are completely absent from the sample. Such markers include the absence of bowls with notched applique rim strips (deemed Noel bowls), Matthews Incised jars, and carafe-necked bottles (Moore and Smith 2009:211–215). Commonly encountered zoomorphic rim rider bowls of the mid-fourteenth through fifteenth centuries are also notably absent from the sample, with the exception of a single sherd that might or might not represent part of a duck bill fragment.

Prior and current research on Mississippian sites within the Nashville Basin suggests that the Mound Bottom and Pack locality was established early on the western periphery (Moore and Smith 2009:202–207; Smith and Moore 2010). Radiocarbon dates from mound construction stages at Mound Bottom and the Brick Church Pike/Love Mound site suggest that the initiation of chiefdom centers at these sites occurred by A.D. 1000. The chiefdom eventually resulting in the massive mound centers at Mound Bottom and Pack was created by nonlocal Mississippian immigrants from the north and west (perhaps Cahokia). Occupation and use/re-use of the Mound Bottom site spanned at least three centuries, a process not seen at most Mississippian sites in the Nashville Basin. Documentation of a palisade at Pack suggests that the site experienced a similar occupation and use/reuse.

About the same time Mound Bottom and Pack were founded in the western study area, an interrelated cultural process was emerging across the region to the east. Several smaller sites (Brandywine Pointe, Spencer, Sogom) have produced evidence for Early Mississippian populations in the form of elevated percentages of shell-tempered, cordmarked ceramics that retained likenesses to the limestone-tempered, cordmarked wares of indigenous Late Woodland populations (Norton and Broster

2004; Smith and Moore 1994; Spears et al. 2008). Available evidence implies that these small and ephemeral Late Woodland groups were open to rapid growth of emerging Mississippian populations.

Large and small chiefdoms developed from west to east across the Nashville Basin between A.D. 1100–1200 (Moore and Smith 2009:207–208). Mound Bottom expanded during this period, as other mound sites including Bowling Farm, Moss-Wright, Old Town, and Sellars Farm were established (Moore and Smith 2009; Putnam 1878). From A.D. 1200 to 1325, the Nashville Basin experienced a significant population expansion with the emergence of numerous small chiefdoms (Moore and Smith 2009:208). However, the relationship of these socio-political centers remains unclear at this time. Mound Bottom (and probably Pack) was still occupied and used during this period. Other sites with significant occupations during this period include Bowling Farm, Cain's Chapel, Emily Hayes Farm, Gray's Farm, Gordontown, Rutherford-Kizer, and Sellars Farm (Moore and Smith 2001, 2009; Moore et al. 2006; Putnam 1878).

By A.D. 1350, the Mound Bottom and Pack locality was abandoned as a major center, but continued to be used as a burial location for dispersed populations. This change coincided with a significant shift in cultural patterning across the Nashville Basin between A.D. 1325–1425 (Moore and Smith 2009:208–210). Region-wide political destabilization occurred as the centralized authority represented by widespread chiefdoms gave way to a more autonomous village-centered organization. The indigenous populations moved into fortified villages represented by such sites as Brentwood Library, Cain's Chapel, Emily Hayes Farm, Gordontown, Gray's Farm, Rutherford-Kizer, and Travellers Rest (Moore 2005; Moore and Smith 2009; Moore et al. 2006; Putnam 1878). Mound construction ceased during this period, and village cemeteries emerged to become the standard mode of interment across the study area.

Nashville Basin residents began a gradual abandonment of the region toward the end of the fourteenth century. By A.D. 1475, nucleated settlements disappear below the level of archaeological visibility (Moore and Smith 2009:210; Moore et al. 2006). This pattern is not restricted to the Nashville Basin. The region is part of a broader dispersal recognized for portions of the Mississippi, Ohio, and Tennessee River watersheds that has been defined as the "Vacant Quarter" (Cobb and Butler 2003; Williams 1990).

## Conclusion

The WPA work at Mound Bottom and Pack was the first significant and well-documented archaeology at both sites. Although we have developed some understanding of each site through the WPA and other exploration results, the relationship between these two impressive Mississippian mound centers remains poorly understood. This mystery will likely linger until we are able to conduct additional investiga-

tions at Pack to build upon site details brought to light by the Myer and WPA works. An unfortunate roadblock to future explorations at Pack continues to be the lack of access to this privately owned site.

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