The Burgess-Mabrey Site: 40JK267, Jackson County, Tennessee

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➤ **Keywords:** Clovis, Cumberland, Southeast

The Burgess-Mabrey site (40JK267) is located on the Cumberland River in Jackson County, Tennessee, in the eastern Central Basin physiographic province at the contact with the Eastern Highland Rim physiographic province. The site is situated on a terrace above the relic channel of the river and adjacent to a tributary. High-quality Fort Payne and Bigby-Cannon chert cobbles and nodules are associated with the Mississippian and Ordovician limestone formations located here.

Prior to the completion of the Cordell Hull dam in 1973, this terrace was in agricultural use. It was during the 1960s that Mr. Mabrey began finding stone tools here while cultivating the terrace. Since the completion of the dam this landform is seasonally inundated by Cordell Hull Lake and is now managed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Avocational archaeologists Dennis Burgess and Larry Mabrey informed the Division of Archaeology of this site upon recognizing the significant numbers of Paleoindian projectile points and tools within this artifact assemblage. Paleoindian projectile points including Cumberland, Clovis, Beaver Lake, and Quad have been recorded (Figure 1). Other Paleoindian artifacts include fluted biface preforms, blade cores, blades, unifacial blade tools, and overshot flakes.

The relatively low number of formal unifacial blade tools here leads us to

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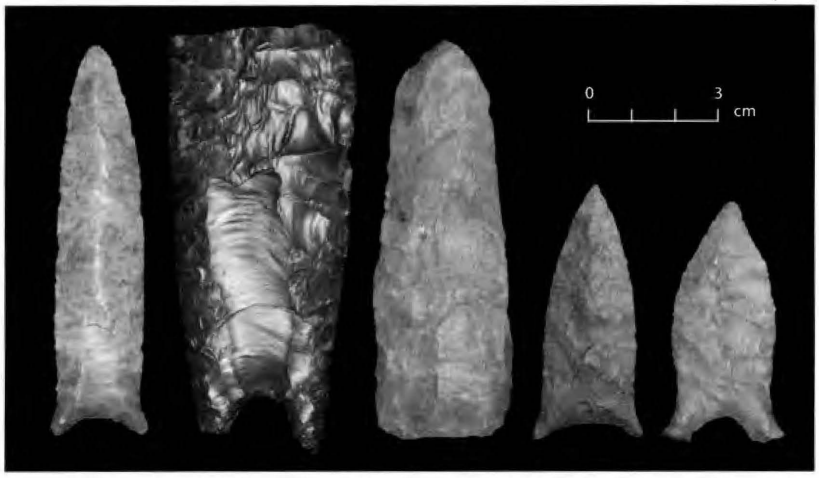

Figure 1. Projectile points from Burgess-Mabrey site: **A,** Cumberland; **B–C,** Clovis; **D,** Beaver Lake; **E,** Quad.

conclude this site may represent short-term Paleoamerican encampments associated with chert procurement. A similar artifact assemblage although larger in scale was recognized at the Sinclair site (40WY111), a Clovis quarry in Wayne County, Tennessee (Broster and Norton 2009). These short-term encampments differ from larger base camps, or staging areas (Anderson 1990:187–196) such as the Carson-Conn-Short site (40BN190), in Benton County, Tennessee, by having fewer numbers and varieties of unifacial blade tools (Broster and Norton 1993). We think the lower unifacial tool counts may indicate that fewer numbers of individuals were involved in trips to procure chert, which possibly were coupled with other tasks such as hunting forays. The primary focus of activity at these quarry locations is selecting raw material and reducing cobbles or nodules. The majority of the newly acquired bifaces and blades were packed and transported back to base camp for final tooling. Given the extent of the chert resources in the region, we think Burgess-Mabrey represents one of many short-term Paleoamerican camps associated with procuring chert. Test excavations are planned for the upper portion of this terrace, which is above the summer pool level of the lake, and within the site boundaries as described from the 1960s.

References Cited

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