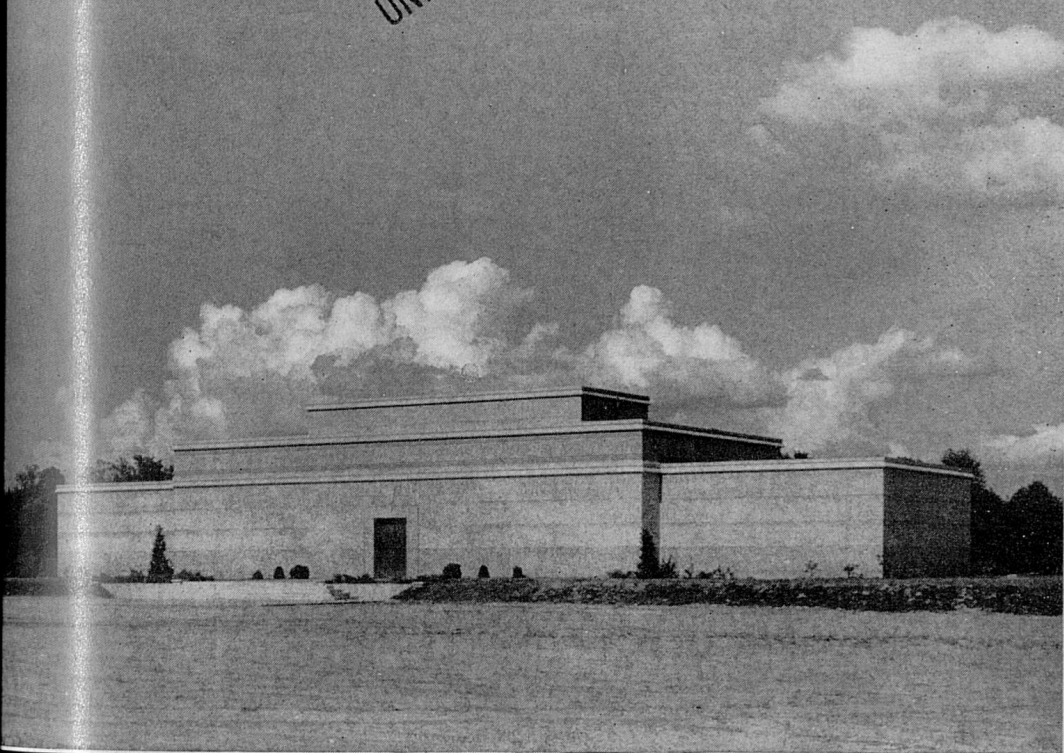


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GEOLOGY LIBRARY
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Mound State Monument

MOUNDVILLE
ALABAMA



ALABAMA MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY

Walter B. Jones, *Director*



19

42

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF
ALABAMA

Stewart J. Lloyd, *Asst. State
Geologist*

Museum Paper 20

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Milestones

- 1200-1400* Great prehistoric city grows and thrives on banks of Warrior River, West-Central Alabama.
- 1500* City deserted.
- 1897 Town of Carthage, white settlement at site of deserted city, re-named *Moundville* because of numerous Indian mounds within its limits.
- 1899 Largest mound at site of deserted city photographed by Robert S. Hodges of the Geological Survey of Alabama.
- 1905-1906 First archaeological excavations made at Moundville by Clarence B. Moore of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.
- 1923 Moundville Historical Society organized to arouse interest in preservation of mounds. Mrs. Jeff Powers, Jr., President.
- 1929 Alabama Museum of Natural History begins archaeological investigations at Moundville after purchasing 175 acres which include most of the 40 mounds in that area. Efforts of the late Dr. Eugene Allen Smith and Dr. James A. Anderson largely responsible.
- 1933 Mound State Park established with the aid of the Federal Emergency Conservation Work Agency.
- 1935 Temporary museum building constructed at Mound State Park.
- 1938-39 Alabama Museum purchases additional land, enlarging Mound State Park to 301 acres which include all the mounds in the area.
- 1938 Mound State Park renamed Mound State Monument. Civilian Conservation Corps, directed by National Park Service and the Alabama Museum of Natural History, begins large-scale development of area.
- 1939 May 10, New Archaeological Museum dedicated.

*Approximate dates.

Mound State Monument



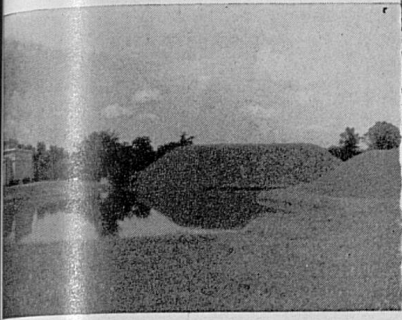
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MOUND STATE MONUMENT



◆ OPEN ALL YEAR ◆

*A blisful lyf, a paisible and a swete,
Ladden the peples in the former
age.—Chaucer, Former Age, line 2*

The Black Warrior River winds slowly among the rolling southern foothills. On the banks of this river many centuries ago there flourished a great Indian metropolis. Here dwelt a pleasant and contented people whose story is not of warring braves but of peaceful artisans. Theirs were days not of strife and treachery, but of quiet toil and worship. These people, given to pottery-making and the building of fine temples, have vanished long ago. The eloquence of their handiwork endures. Their pottery, lodged in the muddy earth, emerges as fresh proof that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever". Their temples, decayed these many years, are yet in evidence, for the pyramidal substructures of these temples—earth mounds of imposing size and number—remain.

The mounds and the story of the people who built them, a story recorded in clay and stone and native metal, are preserved today at Mound State Monument.

THE PREHISTORIC INHABITANTS OF MOUNDVILLE

THEIR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.
The Indians dwelling in the ancient city, though of medium stature, were well built and muscular. Their faces were finely molded and handsome.

Considered stylish were "flattened heads". Head-flattening was caused by strapping the young Indian to a wooden cradle board. The pressure of the leather thongs on the soft bones of the baby's head caused a flattening which remained throughout life. Such a head seems to have become a mark of good rearing, and greatly to be desired, for many mothers went so far as to strap sand bags on their children's heads to induce this flattening.

Moundville . Alabama



Left: This Moundville Indian skull shows the result of artificial head-flattening.
Right: A Moundville Indian skull that was not flattened.

THEIR DRESS AND ORNAMENTATION. Leather and fabrics woven of vegetable fibres were fashioned into garments. In extremely cold weather robes made of feathers were worn over the rest of their clothing.

The Moundville Indians, both men and women, were fond of personal adornment. They wore ear plugs, bracelets and arm bands of copper, and beads and pendants of bone, stone, shell and copper. Many of their pendants, carved with intricate and delicate designs, would invoke the envy of women of today. Long hair-pins were made of bone, and considerable time was devoted to hairdressing.



A STONE
PENDANT
ONCE WORN
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MOUNDVILLE
INDIAN.

THEIR HOUSES. From virgin forests the Moundville Indians gathered logs and poles to construct frameworks for their homes. Of reeds and canes gathered along the river they



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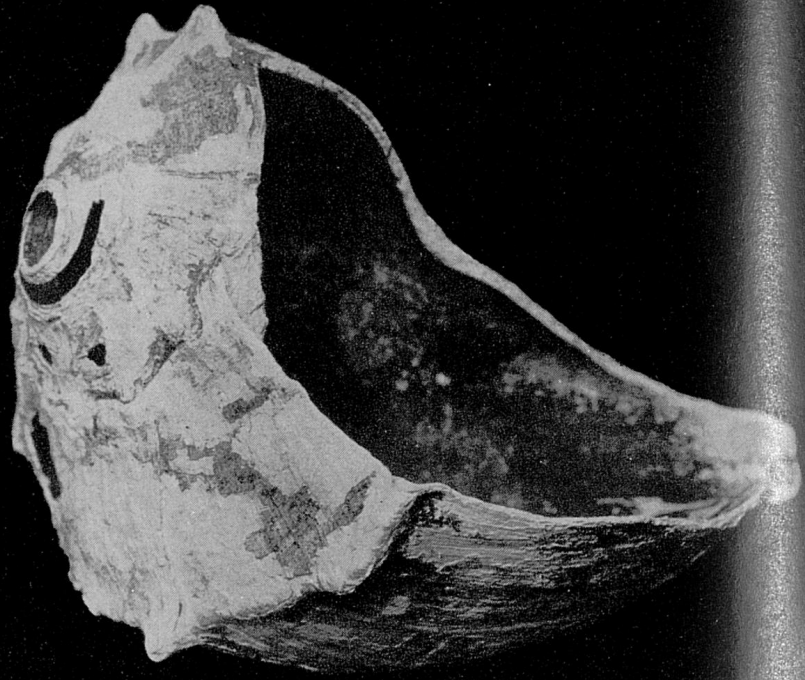
...rove house walls, plastering them
with thick coatings of moist-
ened sand and clay. Thatched
roofs were made of heavy swamp
grass. A hole was left in the
center to serve as a chimney. The
floors were of hard-packed clay
frequently covered with sand.
These structures were neat, com-
fortable and weatherproof.

THEIR FOOD. Living in a tem-
perate climate amid forests teem-
ing with wild game and streams
abundant with fish, the Mound-

ville Indians had little difficulty,
experienced few uncertainties, in
obtaining their food. In addition
to meat and fish obtained from
forest and stream there were
vegetables from fertile fields
which produced with little man-
made effort an ample supply of
maize, squash, beans and pump-
kins.

THEIR IMPLEMENTS. A com-
munity of skilled artisans, these
people fashioned many tools for
food-getting, shelter-making and

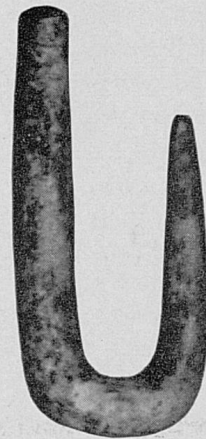
Moundville . Alabama



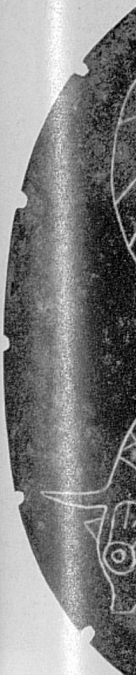
A MOUNDVILLE INDIAN'S SHELL CUP.

clothing-manufacture as well as for more aesthetic pursuits. With nets woven of vegetable fibre and barbless fishhooks of bone and copper they took fish from nearby streams and lakes. With small, skillfully chipped arrowheads they brought down fowl. Ingenious traps ensnared large game. Stone fleshers were used for stripping the meat and dressing the leather. With bone awls and needles sharpened on grinding stones they sewed leather garments. Stone mortars and pestles pulverized their grain. Stone chisels and axes felled, with the aid of fire, trees for their

homes and temples. Cups and forks and spoons carved from shell were their cooking and eating utensils.



COPPER FISHHOOK USED AT MOUNDVILLE IN PREHISTORIC TIMES.



A MEMENTO

THEIR RELIGIOUS importance to the Indian was high. Mounds, on which were enduring monuments of strength and faith. Sons and tons and he carried towering structures of earth pyramid. Wooden temples dwelling houses of priests.

Ceremonies in temples were performed at Moundville.



A MEMENTO OF ABORIGINAL RELIGIOUS CÉREMONIES AT MOUNDVILLE.

THEIR RELIGION. Of paramount importance to the Moundville Indian was his religion. The mounds, on which he worshiped, were enduring monuments to the strength and fervor of his faith. Thousands of tons of clay, loam and sand he carried to form these towering structures. Atop the earth pyramids he built great wooden temples and special dwelling houses for chieftans and priests.

Ceremonies performed in the temples were elaborate and color-

ful. Priests attired in symbolic costumes, and bearing numerous esoteric accoutrements, directed the rituals. Ceremonial trappings included beautiful copper breast plates, shell gorgets, and stone discs and pendants, all delicately carved with intricate, allegorical designs. Among these designs were depictions of the skull and arm-bone, the hand and all-seeing eye, entwined rattlesnakes, and the horned or plumed serpent. The plumed serpent, representing the patron of arts and crafts, was

Moundville . Alabama



PIPES WHICH THE MOUNDVILLE INDIAN MOLDED FROM CLAY.

also worshiped by the Maya, Inca and Aztec Indians.

OTHER ACTIVITIES. Games and contests were popular among the Moundville Indians. One favorite game had the combined features of our football and baseball. Another was similar to a combination of bowling and shuffleboard.

Tobacco-smoking was practiced not as a habit but as a ceremony. Beautiful pipes — some carved from stone, others molded from clay—were smoked through a long cane stem, the bowl resting on the ground. Some pipes were shaped to resemble the human body. Others were carved or molded in the shape of birds or animals.

THEIR BURIAL CUSTOMS. The dead were buried with care and respect. Belief in immortality was expressed by placing food near the deceased to sustain him

in the other world. His treasured belongings, usually pottery vessels, beads, bracelets and other ornaments, were also buried with him.

The Moundville Indian built no burial mounds. His dead were buried in cemetery areas within the city. Usually burial was made in a pit large enough to accommodate the body at full length. Sometimes, however, burial was made in a small pit, the body being drawn up and tied in a sitting position. Burial of the skeleton after it had been stripped of flesh was sometimes practiced, as was also reburial of bones after the flesh had decayed.

MOUNDVILLE POTTERY

The very nature of the Moundville Indian's surroundings provided security and leisure. His time was not consumed in constant search for food and warmth, and to squander his time, grow



THE MOUNDVILLE POTTER WAS A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN.

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MOUNDVILLE POTTERY COVERS A VARIETY OF SHAPES.

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POTTERY BEAKER WITH A SYMBOLIC DESIGN.

After the beaker was removed from the ground the incised lines were filled with white paint in order to emphasize the design.

fat and lazy, was not in him. His skill and versatility required expression, which he found in the art of pottery-making.

He manufactured great quantities of pottery for domestic use. Moistening clay which he took from the river bank, he kneaded into it particles of crushed shell. This was to keep the molded clay from cracking when it hardened. He shaped the clay into jars, pots, bowls and other utilitarian objects, hardening them with fire. This domestic ware was plain, bearing no decoration.

It was through non-utilitarian ware, exquisitely decorated, that

the Moundville Indian wrought careful and lasting expression of his artistry. The potter used only his finest clay for this ware. After forming the clay into some delicately molded vessel, then hardening it with fire, he dipped the vessel into a black "wash" which coated it with a smooth, black film. The coloring agent contained in this "wash" was derived, indirectly, from plants.

Usually the potter decorated the vessel with some intricate design, often incising the lines on the vessel before it was hardened, at other times scratching them on the hardened vessel. Sometimes the etched or incised lines

Moundville . Alabama

of the design were filled with red paint, derived from iron ore, which gave the design a striking appearance on the polished black surface of the vessel.

Water bottles, bowls, pots, shallow dishes, and effigy vessels were made of this thin, black ware. Their forms included frog, duck, beaver, rabbit, eagle, bat, owl, fish, shell and even human shapes.

Designs incised or engraved on this ware depicted the plumed or horned serpent, the ivory-billed woodpecker, eagle, sun, human hand and eye, skull and arm-bones, and numerous others.

Sometimes vessels were decorated with red and white paint (derived from iron and lead ore) instead of being "washed" black. This type of decoration was not common, however.

WHAT TO SEE AT MOUND STATE MONUMENT

The Mounds

The present-day visitor to Mound State Monument may see, on the 300-acre Monument tract, 40 mounds which are the remnants of the Moundville Indians' great city.

The visitor will be interested in identifying these mounds as *domiciliary* (as distinguished from burial mounds and effigy mounds found at other Indian sites). These *domiciliary mounds*, which were erected as substructures for temples and other im-

portant buildings, are rectangular truncated-pyramids. Their sizes vary. The largest, called Mound "B" (see map), is 58½ feet high and covers almost two acres.

Prehistoric Lakes

The several lakes within the Monument area are restorations, made after considerable research, of prehistoric reservoirs. The forty- to sixty-foot bluff at the ancient city's river front made the Warrior River an impractical source of water supply. These lakes, therefore, may have been used to catch and hold water for daily use, although digging of the lakes was probably incidental to obtaining earth for mound construction. In one of the lakes, at least, the Moundville Indian fished. This is evidenced by a copper fishhook found in the bed of Lake No. 4 (see map).

Recreational Facilities

While educational or passive recreational facilities predominate, active recreational opportunities include hiking and attendant nature study. The Monument is a wildlife sanctuary.

The Monument tract has been developed to provide sheltered picnic areas and scenic foot trails along the river banks. Picnic tables and benches are available. Drinking water is provided by artesian wells.

A caretaker is on duty at all times to furnish information and help to picnickers, and guides are

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MOUND "B" AND VISITORS.

RESTORED PREHISTORIC LAKE
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The Archaeological Museum

ARRANGEMENT. The archaeological museum houses an exhibit hall and two *in situ* burial groups. The exhibit hall makes up the main part of the building. The *in situ* burial groups are enclosed in wings at the north and south ends of the exhibit hall.

DESIGN. Design of the building itself was based on ideas used by the Moundville Indian in shaping and decorating his artifacts. The classic three-step motif expressed in the three roof levels of the museum, and used over the doorway, was a favorite design element of the Moundville artist. The skull and arm-bone design making up the parapet frieze was copied from a design on a Moundville Indian pot (*see photograph on p. 11*). The medallion over the entrance is an enlarged reproduction of a stone pendant once owned by a Moundville Indian (*see photograph on p. 4*). This pendant as well as the pot from which the frieze was copied may be seen in the exhibit hall.

MAIN EXHIBIT HALL. Displays in the exhibit hall are designed to illustrate (1) a brief history of prehistoric man, (2) cultural traits and physical characteristics of the prehistoric Moundvillian, and (3) physical features of Mound State Monument.

A brief story of prehistoric mankind is given in the three wall cases to the visitor's left as

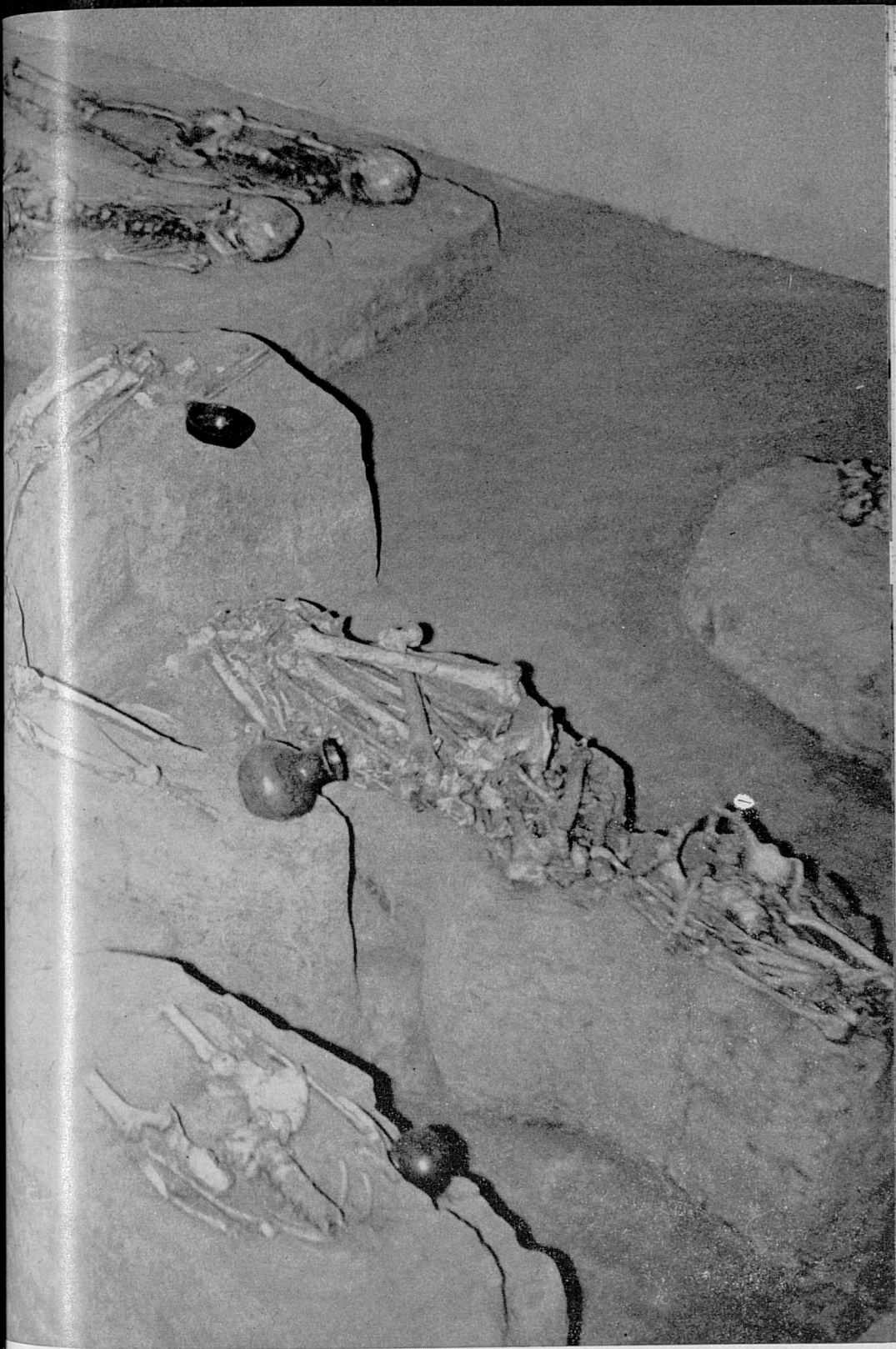
he enters the museum. Cultural traits of the Moundville Indian are illustrated in the eight cases along the back wall, and in the five table cases in the exhibit hall. Physical features of Mound State Monument are depicted in the three wall cases to the visitor's left as he leaves the museum.

BURIAL GROUPS. The north wing of the museum (to the visitor's left as he enters the building) encloses seventeen *in situ* burials. The south wing (to the visitor's left as he leaves the building) encloses forty such burials. These fifty-seven burials, together with their accompanying pottery, ornaments and other artifacts, have been uncovered and left in the ground exactly as they were found.

These burials had been placed in a cemetery area, not a mound. Most of the burials were approximately one and one-half feet under the surface of the ground, although some were only four inches underground and others were three feet. The original ground-level is demonstrated in the exhibit by lines drawn around the edges of the pits.

Studies of Moundville skeletal remains have revealed the sex and individual age (*i.e.*, how old the individual was at the time of burial) of each burial, as well as certain physical defects. Effects of head-flattening, a practice described elsewhere on these pages, are apparent on many of the skulls.

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ARTIFACTS HAVE BEEN UNCOVERED AND LEFT IN THE GROUND JUST AS THEY WERE FOUND.

Moundville . Alabama

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HOW TO REACH THE MONUMENT

BY AUTOMOBILE. Mound State Monument is located on Alabama Highway No. 13 (paved) at the edge of the town of Moundville, Alabama, seventeen miles south of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The dividing line of Tuscaloosa and Hale Counties runs through the Monument area.

BY TRAIN OR BUS. Moundville, Alabama is located on the A.G.S. Railroad, a part of the Southern Railway System, which operates passenger trains between New York and New Orleans *via* Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Moundville and Meridian. Greyhound buses running from Tuscaloosa to Mobile pass through Moundville.

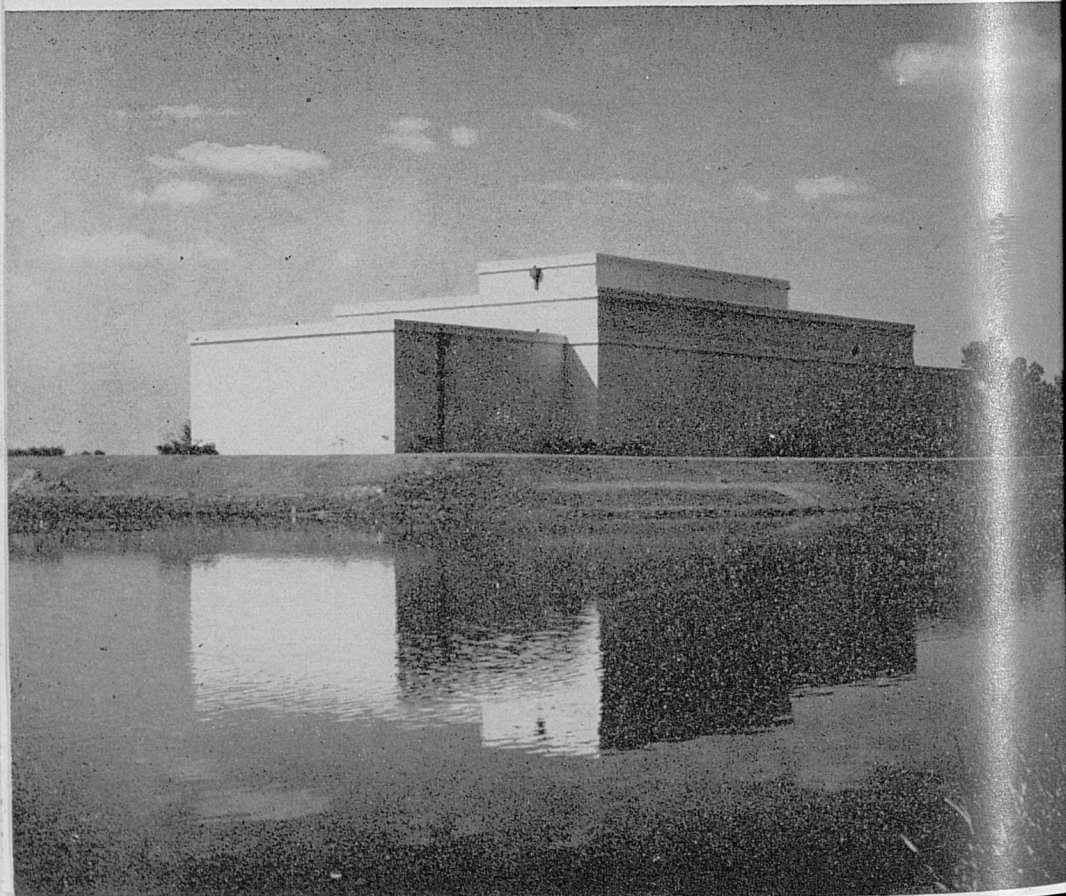
ADMINISTRATION OF MOUND STATE MONUMENT

Mound State Monument is owned by the Alabama Museum

of Natural History, University, Alabama. It is being developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps under the joint direction of the National Park Service and the Alabama Museum of Natural History.

The Monument is open daily, including Sundays, from 9:00 A.M. until dark, the year around. A caretaker, equipped to guide the visitor and offer any other assistance, resides on the Monument grounds.

A small admission charge is made to the Monument Museum. Later a gate charge will be made to enter the area. Free showing of sound movies illustrating Moundville Indian culture may be arranged. *Arrangements for group visits should be made in advance. Address: The Curator, Alabama Museum of Natural History, University, Alabama.*



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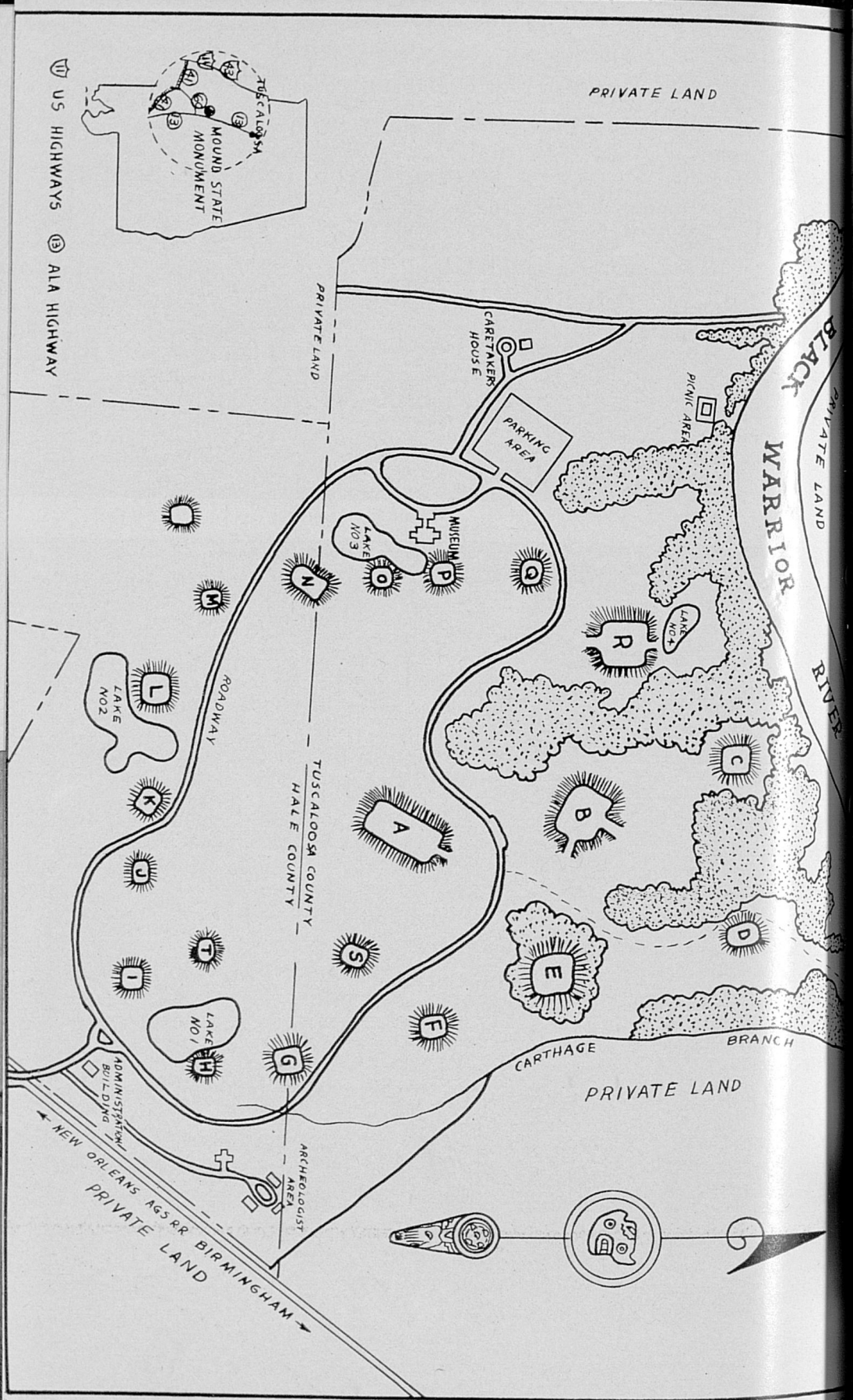
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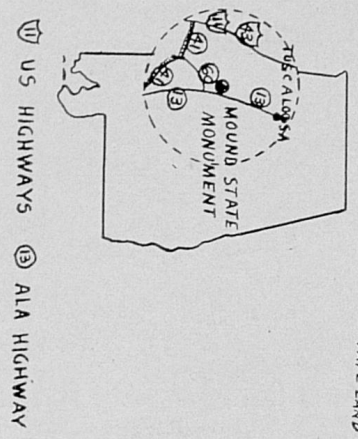


SPECIAL VISITS BY SCHOOL CLASSES AND OTHER CIVIC GROUPS MAY
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Moundville . Alabama



MAP OF MOUND STATE MONUMENT. MOUNDS ARE DESIGNATED BY LETTERS.



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Moundville

RULES AND REGULATIONS

◆ Briefed ◆

Mound State Monument exists as an instrument for PRESERVATION. Visitors are requested to aid the Monument administration by carefully observing the following regulations. These rules are enforced for the comfort and convenience of the visitor as well as for the protection of scenic and archaeological features.

AUTOMOBILES. Monument roadways are altogether recreational in character and the speed of vehicle traffic is therefore limited to 15 miles per hour. Drive carefully for the protection of yourself and other visitors.

WILDLIFE GROUNDS. The Monument is a wildlife sanctuary. Birds and animals must not be molested.

HUNTING AND FISHING ARE PROHIBITED. Firearms and air rifles must not be carried within the Monument boundaries.

Trees and shrubs must not be broken. Do not carve initials on or pull the bark from trees. Flowers must not be picked. *The injury or defacement of any natural feature is prohibited.*

PRIVATE OPERATIONS AND ADVERTISING. To solicit or sell anything, no matter of what nature, except by persons holding contract with Mound State Monument, is prohibited.

No advertising, or distribution of placards or advertising matter, is permitted on the Monument grounds.

FIRES. Fires are one of the greatest perils to the natural features of the Monument. Smokers

are requested to exercise care in the disposal of matches, cigarettes, etc. *Picnickers must confine fires to designated areas and extinguish them completely before leaving.*

PICNICKERS. All visitors are welcome to utilize the public picnic areas and campgrounds. Picnicking must be confined to sites designated by the caretaker.

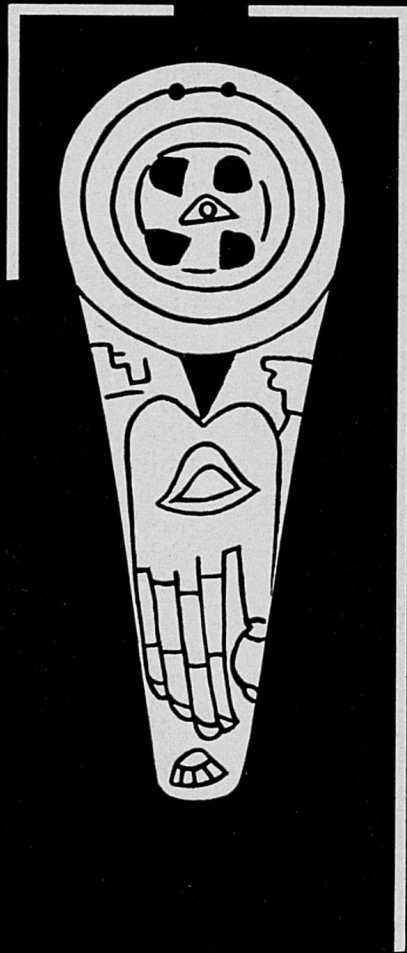
Do not throw paper, lunch refuse or other trash on the roads, trails, or elsewhere. Deposit all such debris in the receptacles provided for that purpose. Picnickers may burn combustible rubbish in incinerators.

Special permission must be obtained to use picnic areas after dark.

BUILDINGS AND ARCHAEOLOGIC FEATURES. To mar or deface any building, or to mark, disturb or injure any archaeological feature on the Monument grounds, is a violation of the law.

CARETAKER AND GUIDES. The caretaker and guides are here to help and advise you as well as to enforce regulations. Consult them about anything pertaining to the Monument.





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