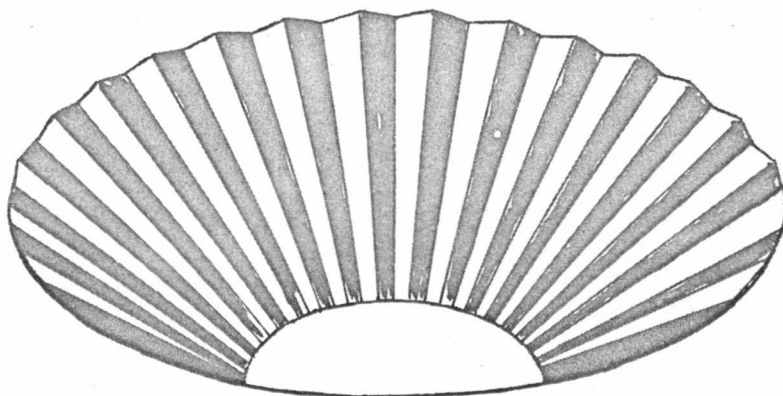


ARCHEOLOGY OF THE FUNERAL MOUND

OCMULGEE National Monument, Georgia



By Charles H. Fairbanks with introduction by Frank M. Setzler

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purpose. At a point 17 centimeters from the poll a series of shallow scratches encircled the shaft for a distance of 5 centimeters. They have all the appearance of hafting marks. No burial was found with this spud but it seems certain that it belongs with the Macon Plateau complex.

In testing the area just west of the Funeral Mound for the construction of the parking area a series of connected pits was uncovered. They were from 3 to 7 feet wide and 1 to 1.5 feet deep and extended for a distance of 30 feet. They were filled with brown soil and contained Bibb Plain and Hawkins Fabric Marked sherds, both good Macon Plateau types. They evidently represent the bases of the fortification trenches that were found surrounding the Macon Plateau at Mound D (the Cornfield Mound), the Middle Plateau, and Mound A (the Great Temple Mound). These will be described more completely in the report of the Mound D Plateau as it was there that they were typically developed. Here it is sufficient to say that the small remnants found west of the Funeral Mound suggest that the line of connected pits, or irregular trenches, seems pretty definitely to have encircled the entire village. Those at Mound D were described by Kelly as dugouts with a suggestion that they were pit houses (Kelly, 1938, pp. 12-22). All present evidence suggests that they were not pit houses but fortifications.

The occupational detritus of the village site varied in depth from a few inches below the plowline to a depth of 2 feet in a few cases. No natural stratigraphy was observed and it was necessary to segregate the materials by arbitrary levels only. The sherd collections from the survey along the old road site were taken in 6-inch levels and are presented in graphic form in Figure 6. It will be noted that the bottom level contained remarkably few sherds and that the bulk of the collections is represented in the upper three levels. The deposits are mixed, but the segregation of types gives a fair representation of their stratigraphic positions. The graphs represent the typical distribution for sherds from the entire area and are a reliable index of the situations on the plateau. In spite of the thickness of the arbitrary levels (0.5 foot) the collections do have value as the large number of sherds present gives the general picture as smaller collections might not do. The pottery complexes and types are sufficiently well known that their identification is positive.

On the western edge of the plateau a series of test pits were sunk by Gordon R. Willey in a search for more refined stratigraphy. Fifteen pits 5 by 10 feet were located in random positions where the deposits appeared to be less disturbed. The method of recording was to wash each sherd as it was excavated and to determine its type. The types were then plotted on graph paper in the proper pits and levels. The arbitrary levels were 3 inches thick. The sherd summaries are presented in graphic form for the entire series of pits in Figure 6. This is a much smaller sample than that from the old road survey but it was more precisely taken. It agrees very well with the larger sample.

Sixteen burials were found in the village site. Of these, 5 are historic Creek, being accompanied by glass beads in 4 instances, and by fragments of an iron knife in the fifth. The majority of the glass beads were of the small, blue and red Venetian type; others were red with a translucent green core (the Cornaline d'Alleppo or Hudson's Bay bead), several blue glass pendants

and eight faceted white glass beads were also recovered. All the beads are of types commonly occurring with historic Creek burials in the vicinity of the trading post stockade on the Middle Plateau.

In addition to glass beads, two of the burials, both infants, were accompanied by shell cores of the marine conch or whelk (*Busycon perversum*) showing the process of manufacture into large tubular beads. Some of the cores were grooved preparatory to breaking off the bead. The occurrence of partly manufactured conch columella beads with burials had not previously been seen in this area. A somewhat similar feature was found in Hamilton component burials on Hiwassee Island, except that in this case they seem to be the completed ornament and were buried mostly with adults (Lewis and Kneberg, 1946, p. 140, plate 80A).

Three of the historic burials were partly flexed on the right side, two with the skull lying on the right side, the third with the skull face down. The burial which was accompanied by the iron knife (Burial 5), was fully flexed and, in addition, there were small quantities of red iron oxide in association with the bones. There seems to be no specific alignment of the burials, 1 being with the head east, 1 southeast, 1 north, and 1 west.

Of the remaining burials in the village site, 3 were partly flexed and unaccompanied by grave goods, 5 were extended, 1 consisted of a skull only, and 1 was a bundle burial. One was partly flexed on the right side and was accompanied by a profusion of grave goods indicating a Macon Plateau provenience. These grave goods consisted of a large two-hole circular shell gorget 12.8 centimeters in diameter; a small flat, slightly plano-convex adze (see plate 21 B), five lanceolate shell objects; numerous flint chips, a large projecting stem pottery pipe (see plate 21 E) and a pottery vessel with surged rim and two grooved loop handles with nodes (see plate 16; Appendix B, Specimen 39-39/1 Bi 1). The pottery vessel is 20 centimeters in diameter and 14 centimeters in height and is typical Bibb Plain. The pipe has characteristics of paste and temper like Bibb Plain. The lanceolate shell objects are not perforated, but are made of mussel shell and are completely unknown as to use or function. It is felt that the extended and bundle burials, and possibly more than one of the partly flexed burials, can be assigned to the Macon Plateau complex. Only those definitely associated with historic objects can safely be assigned to the historic Creek occupation.

19TH-CENTURY FEATURES

The whole area of the Funeral Mound and the adjacent village site was blanketed with a detritus of 19th-century crockery and iron tools. In most cases this material is readily separated on a typological basis from the historic Creek materials of the beginning of the 18th century. Starting on the southeast side of the mound and turning northward along the eastern edge an historic trench was discovered. It averaged 2 feet deep and 2 feet wide. The trench was filled with mixed earth containing large amounts of historic materials, especially glazed crockery and iron tools. It was traced to the edge of the railroad cut. It evidently is the remains of a Civil War fortification trench dug as part of the eastern defenses of Macon. No evidence of aboriginal use could be found in the trench. The various cuts of the Central of Georgia Railway have already been discussed.

In the matter of art forms, one dominant pattern is seen—the plainness of all objects. The pottery is predominantly plain, even in more finished types. Shell cups and gorgets are unornamented. We do get a little incised decoration on Macon Thick, some stamping and some cord impressing. There is also a very little effigy work. But I think it is obvious that the Macon Plateau people were sophisticated enough to appreciate plain, undecorated forms. The cultural level was elaborate enough to allow considerable decoration. They were undoubtedly in communication with people who produced pottery with beautiful surface decorations. The elaborateness of the burial complex and the massiveness of the temple mound construction indicates considerable energy applied to nonproductive ends. In short, I think they liked their pottery plain and could appreciate gracefully proportioned jars and plain surfaced shell gorgets.

Physical Type

Not a single measurable skull can be identified in the collections as belonging to the Macon Plateau period at the Funeral Mound. This is unfortunate as field photographs indicate many burials to have been in at least fair shape. Therefore, at present nothing can be said about physical type.

In summary the Macon Plateau component at Mound C presents the burial complex, with certain additional village elements, of an Early Mississippian group. It is far from a complete trait list for the community as a whole. However, the trait list in Appendix D will serve as a preliminary definition of the Macon Plateau focus and thus of the period. The pattern of life as it emerges is discussed in the section, "Life at the Site." Temporal positions and other southeastern groups related to the Macon Plateau focus are discussed in "Affiliations of the Macon Plateau Focus." The allusion here given to Macon Plateau traits not found at the Funeral Mound but occurring at other components is simply an attempt to round out the picture of the cultural entity which existed here.

Lamar Period

There is a major Lamar period site only 2½ miles below the Funeral Mound and another smaller Lamar site almost immediately across the river (the Central City Park Site). Yet there is an extremely small amount of Lamar period pottery at the Funeral Mound. Lamar complex pottery types present were:

Types	Number of Sherds	Percent
Lamar Plain.....	371	70.0
Lamar Complicated Stamped.....	64	12.1
Lamar Bold Incised.....	92	17.3
Mercier Check Stamped.....	3	0.6
Total Lamar Complex.....	530	100.0

Source: (Sears, 1951a, p. 32).

This is only 2.6 percent of the total sherds of the Funeral Mound collections. It indicates a very light occupation during the Lamar period. As the Lamar period forms an evolutionary sequence with Ocmulgee Fields period it is very possible that some Lamar sherds actually belong on the Ocmulgee Fields end of the ranges

of the several pottery types. This is especially possible with Lamar Plain and Lamar Bold Incised, less possible with Lamar Complicated Stamped and Mercier Check Stamped which do not have comparable types in the Ocmulgee Fields horizon. At the present time we postulate a gap of some 250 years between the end of Macon Plateau and the beginning of Lamar. This is the period of the Etowah and Savannah complexes. It is possible that the small showing of Lamar sherds may be due to the Lamar period Indians having avoided the area for religious reasons. The large mounds might well have been objects of awe, and the evidence of Adair shows that even in the 18th century, Ocmulgee Fields was reputed to be the home of poltergeists and other spirits (Adair, 1775, p. 35). At any rate little cultural analysis is possible with the Lamar remains.

Ocmulgee Fields Period

The Ocmulgee Fields or Historic Creek occupation at the Funeral Mound area is much heavier than any of the early complexes or the Lamar occupation. It constitutes, in fact, a major occupation. The remains consist of burials, pottery, and some artifacts. No houses were identified and it is possible that the main village was to the east around the Carolinian trading post. The burials have been described in the section devoted to the village site adjacent to the Funeral Mound. Traits that can be identified with the Ocmulgee Fields component are summarized in Appendix D. Here it might be said that the trade objects, (mostly beads) are those which would be expected in the period from 1685 to 1716. Iron knives, copper cones (janglers), brass hawk bells, and some pieces of musket parts make up the list of trade objects. It is probable that all the materials are of English origin. However, one sherd of untyped Spanish Majolica was found at the trading post site. The large, tubular shell beads were made from the core of the conch. Two examples of conch cores in process of manufacture were found with infant burials. Some of the pits showed charred fragments of corn kernels but they were too small for further analysis.

Sherds make up the bulk of the collection, with all the Ocmulgee Fields types represented. They are as follows:

Types	Number of Sherds	Percent
Ocmulgee Fields Plain.....	2,190	31.7
Ocmulgee Fields Incised.....	1,654	23.9
Walnut Roughened.....	2,971	42.9
Kasita Red Filmed.....	102	1.5
Total Ocmulgee Fields Complex.....	6,917	100.0

These sherds were concentrated in the upper levels of the stratigraphic blocks, as would be expected. The fact that they also appear in levels of the Macon Plateau period is evidence of disturbances, not cultural evolution from Macon Plateau to Ocmulgee Fields. Actually the total picture is that of a discontinuous occupation with nearly 600 years between the two occupations. The types have been described previously and the description need not be repeated here (Jennings and Fairbanks, 1939, 1940). As far as I can see the sherd graphs show no differential concentration of Ocmulgee Fields types. Actually the

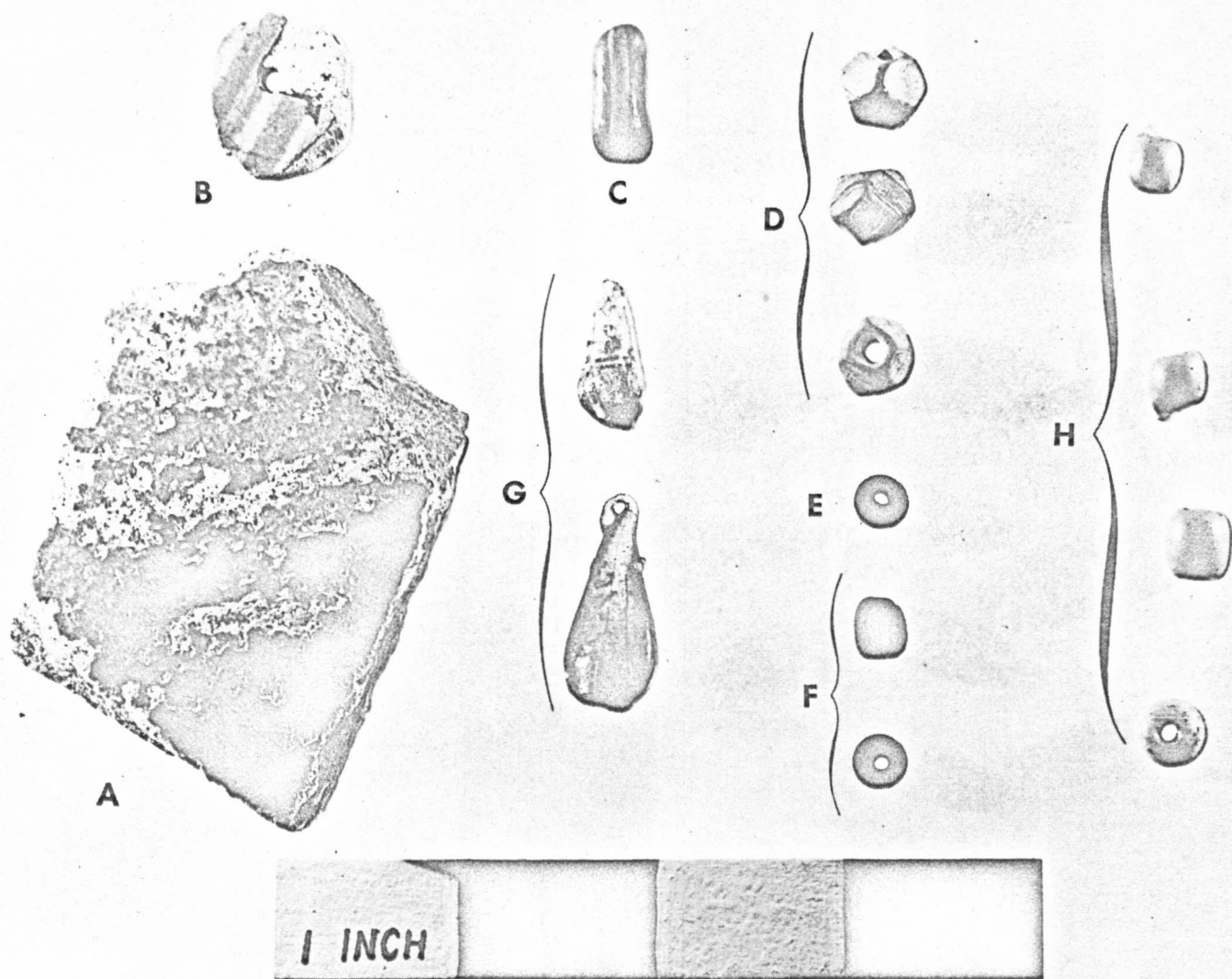


PLATE 20. Historic materials from the Creek occupation of the Funeral Mound area.

A.—Green glazed Spanish olive jar sherd (Cat. No. 11889/1 Bi 1) from miscellaneous collections.

B.—Blue-on-white Spanish majolica sherd cut into perforated disc (Cat. No. 38-11845) from village area.

C.—Long, blue glass bead with red and white stripes (Cat. No. 39-288/1 Bi 1) from village area.

D.—Three faceted white glass beads (Cat. No. 38-11892/1 Bi 1) with Burial 2.

E.—Spherical bead, at present black, but may have been green originally (Cat. No. 39-266/1 Bi 1) from village area.

F.—Two red glass beads with green centers, the Hudson's Bay bead, from Pit 38-1.

G.—Two blue glass pendants (Cat. No. 39-123 and 38-11892/1 Bi 1), the latter from Burial 2.

H.—Opaque white glass beads (Cat. No. 38-11896/1 Bi 1) from Burial 6.

6. Copper objects
 - a. Sheet copper arm bands
 - b. Cones, janglers
 - c. Harness bells, marked KW
 - d. Wire rings
 - e. Wire bracelets
 - f. Flat buttons
 - g. Tubes, rolled sheet, small
7. Glass objects
 - a. Bottles, rare
 - b. Uniface scrapers, oval
 - c. Mirrors, small
8. Beads: Seed in blue, red, white, black; Cornaline d'Alleppo or Hudson's Bay, clear faceted, black with white inlay, opaque white with blue or red lines, blue faceted
9. Pipes: English clay, TD and RT marks
10. Lead objects: Musket balls, 60 caliber to No. 6 shot, bale seals

11. Silver objects
 - a. Spanish coin, Philip IV, 1664, Mexico City Mint
 - b. Double-pierced coin
12. Ceramics
 - a. Majolica, blue and white
 - b. Olive jar sherds with green glaze
 - c. Rhenish salt glaze mug wares

VIII. MILITARY ACTIVITY

A. Tools and Weapons Complex

1. Bow and arrow
2. Musket, pistol and sword
3. Axe

B. Military Organization Complex

1. (D) Creek Confederacy
2. (D) Allied with Great Britain against Spanish and Spanish Indians