

ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT THE SPAWN MOUND,
39LK201, LAKE COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

by

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Abstract

The Spawn Mound, 39LK201, overlooking Brant Lake in eastern South Dakota, appears to be a Plains Woodland burial mound later used by historic Dakota for secondary interments. The 1966 excavations revealed two burial pits believed to be contemporaneous with the erection of the mound, which were assigned to the Plains Woodland component, and a third pit at the center of the mound which has been assigned to the historic Dakota. Each of the Woodland burial pits contained at least three individuals buried in the flexed position. The intrusive pit contained the remains of at least two individuals, apparently "bundle" burials. These intrusive burials were accompanied by European trade items.

On the basis of the limited ceramic material from the mound, including one rim sherd of the Ellis Cord Impressed type, as well as various lithic materials recovered in the mound fill, the Plains Woodland component has been tentatively assigned to the Loseke Focus. The historic burials would appear to date between A. D. 1800-1850.

Introduction

The Spawn Mound, 39LK201, is an artificial earthen tumulus near Brant Lake, one mile north of Chester, in the southeastern corner of Lake County, South Dakota (Fig. 1). Long known to local people and vacationers as a landmark with Indian associations, the mound has nevertheless escaped the activities of

"pothunters" over the past several years due to the vigilant guardianship of the landowner Mr. Garrett Spawn.

On May 13, 14, 15, and 17, 1966, the mound was partially excavated by a party sponsored by the W. H. Over Dakota Museum of the University of South Dakota, Vermillion; the Pettigrew Museum, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; the Minnehaha County Historical Society; and the Northwest Chapter of the Iowa Archeological Society. Professional direction of the volunteer crew of workmen was provided by James H. Howard, Director of the W. H. Over Dakota Museum, and Robert D. Gant, at that time Assistant Director of the museum. Approximately 40 persons participated in the work. The author and his family wish especially to thank Kenneth and Dorothy Rogers of the Pettigrew Museum and Mr. and Mrs. Garrett Spawn for their kind hospitality during the period of work at the site.

The Spawn Mound is attractively situated on a low hill overlooking Brant Lake, which lies to the north (Pl. 1a). The mound itself is located on the apex of the hill, the highest point in the immediate area. Today it measures approximately 80 feet in diameter, with a maximum apical height of 2.36 feet. The mound was undoubtedly higher at one time, as it has been farmed over for many years, and had, as a matter of fact, been under cultivation the year previous to its excavation.

The immediate area of the mound appears to have been used as a camping site by prehistoric and historic Indians. A circular area about four acres in diameter

large chopper, is 54.0 mm. long and has a maximum thickness of 13.0 mm. It is made of reddish granite (Pl. 3f). Another, with large flake scars, seems to be the tip of a pyriform blade (Pl. 3g). It is 10.5 mm. thick and made of dark gray chert. The two smaller specimens are more elongate in shape and are probably fragments of knives. One, of limestone, is 36.0 mm. in length, 22.0 mm. in maximum width, and 7.5 mm. in maximum thickness. It has two cutting edges and terminates in a rounded point at the unbroken end (Pl. 3h). The smallest specimen, of white quartzite, also has two cutting edges. It terminates in a sharp point at the unbroken end. It is 16.0 mm. long, has a maximum width of 17.0 mm., and a maximum thickness of 10.0 mm. (Pl. 3i).

Flakes: Nine specimens in this category were recovered. Jasper, chert, and quartzite are the materials represented. Most of the specimens appear to be unmodified flakes resulting from the manufacture of large chipped stone implements. Two have a purposely flaked edge along one side, and five could possibly have been used as knives or scrapers. They average 11.0 mm. in thickness and vary from 50.0 to 20.0 mm. in maximum length (six representative specimens are shown in Plate 3j-o).

Ground Stone

Manos or Hammerstones: Two granite stones showing evidence of shaping were recovered (Pl. 2l-m). Both are flattened slightly on one face from use as grinding or pounding implements. One example is slightly damaged on one side. The complete specimen is 78.0 mm. in length, 52.0 mm. in maximum width, and 40.0 mm. in thickness. The other is 70.0 mm. in length, 63.0 mm. in width, and 51.0 mm. in maximum thickness.

Trade Items

Two trade items were recovered in connection with the two interments of

Burial 3. Both were found at the very bottom of the burial pit, indicating their contemporaneity with the skeletal material.

Finger Ring: A fragment of an iron finger ring, badly corroded, has a maximum width of 3.0 mm. and a thickness of 2.25 mm. (Pl. 2k). Projecting from the arc of the surviving section, the ring had a diameter of ca. 16.5 mm.

Glass Bead: A single glass trade bead, of a type known in the Indian trade as a "neck bead," was also found with Burial 3 (Pl. 2j). It is black in color with a white, ribbon-like design on the outer surface, produced by wrapping glass paste about the bead and then fusing it with heat. The bead is 10.0 mm. in diameter, 9.0 mm. in thickness, and the hole is 3.0 mm. in diameter.

Faunal Remains

Faunal remains from the site were identified by William M. Bass and B. Miles Gilbert of the Physical Anthropology Laboratory, University of Kansas. Their findings were as follows:

	Probable Number Adult
<u>Artiodactyla</u>	
<u>Bovidae</u>	
<u>Bison bison</u> - buffalo	29
<u>Cervidae</u>	
<u>Odocoileus virginianus</u> - deer	1
<u>Lagomorpha</u>	
<u>Leporidae</u>	
<u>Lepus townsendi</u> - jackrabbit	1
<u>Sylvilagus floridanus</u> - cottontail	2
<u>Carnivora</u>	
<u>Mustelidae</u>	
<u>Mephitis mephitis</u> - striped skunk	2
<u>Aves</u>	
<u>Anatinae</u>	
<u>Anas</u> sp. - black or mallard duck	1

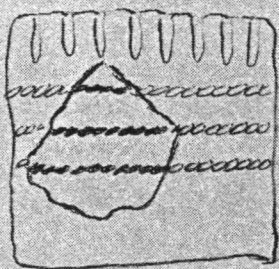
Plate 2

Ceramics, Ground Stone, and Historic Artifacts

- a: Fragment of a rim sherd, probably of the Ellis Cord Impressed type.
- b: Sketch indicating probable position of rim fragment (after Hurt 1952: Fig. 15, No. 5).
- c-i: Body sherds from the Spawn Mound.
- j: Glass "neck" bead.
- k: Fragment of iron finger ring.
- l-m: Manos or hammerstones.



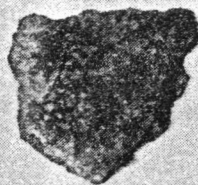
a



b



c



d



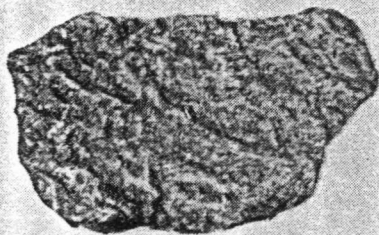
e



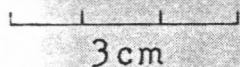
f



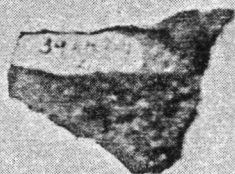
g



h



3 cm



i



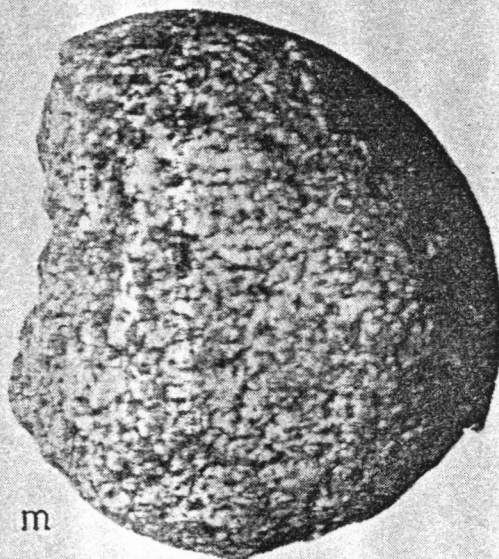
j



k



l



m